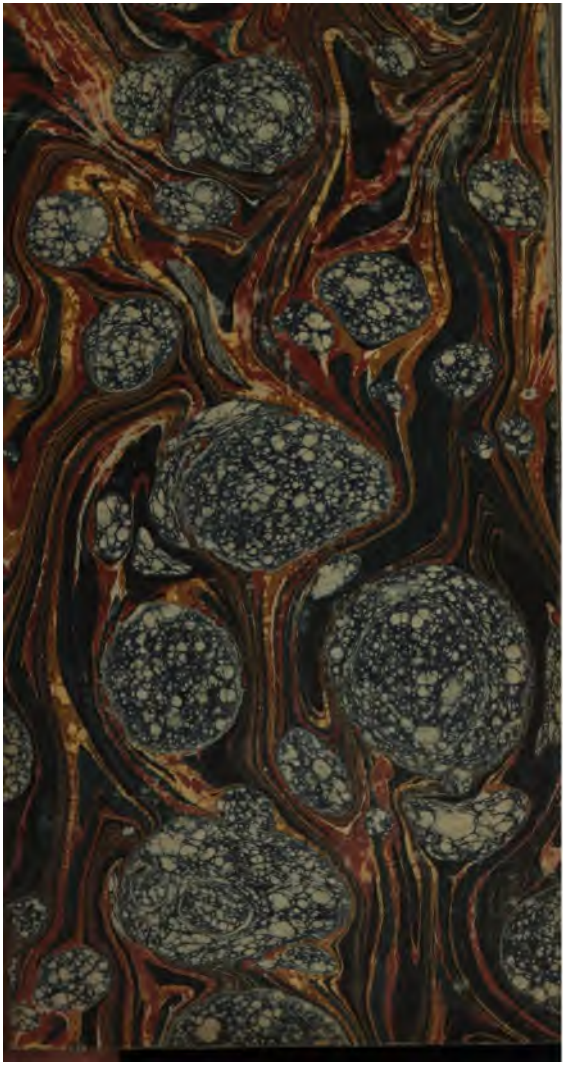

47. 1788.

THE

YOUNG DRUMMER,

OR THE

AFFECTIONATE SON.

A Tale of the Russian Campaign.

"The Lord Himself is thy Keeper; the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand." Ps. cxxi.

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THE

YOUNG DRUMMER.

CHAPTER I.

The Sick Room.

EMILY, a little girl, a year and a half old, the daughter of a saddler of the name of Winch, lay dangerously ill. A violent fever had seized upon the child, and threatened to snap the tender thread of life. With hearts bowed down by anxiety, her parents watched by turns the bed of their little darling, offering up fervent and unremitting prayers to their Heavenly Father, for that help, which He alone had power to bestow.

In the midst of these absorbing cares, the sixth night had now arrived.

The room in which Emily's cradle was placed was lighted only by the feeble rays of a night-lamp, rendered still more dim and melancholy by a large book placed upright before it as a screen. Close beside the child's sick bed, was the easy chair in which her mother sat watching her. No sleep weighed down those weary eyelids, for a mother's love, a mother's fears kept them open. Just as the town clocks were announcing the hour of midnight, Winch himself entered the room; noiselessly gliding up to his wife, he inquired in an undertone; "No better yet?" She mournfully shook her head and pointed to the child.

who with flushed cheeks, and hurried breathing, lay tossing restlessly in her cradle. Her father stood for a few moments gazing upon her in silence; then said softly: "Now go, dear wife, and lie down; it is my turn to watch."

"No," she replied, "I could not sleep, were I even to lie down. My anxiety is only so much greater when I am away from her."

"But think of your own health," interposed her husband, "You cannot hold out if you go on in this way; and it will end in my having two sick ones to attend upon instead of one. Be persuaded and go."

"Do'nt be concerned on my account," she answered, "rest is more necessary for you than for me. You have to earn the daily bread for us all, and a hard day's work is not made lighter by a sleepless night; and in these bad times too, when a man has to work six times as much as formerly, if he would do all that is required of him. This cruel billetting is ruinous. There are twenty French soldiers quartered upon us for to-morrow. They must all be fed—and how? But I should care for nothing, if only Emily were out of danger. That is my greatest care."

"Mine too," said Mr. Winch, with a deep sigh, and then again endeavoured to induce his wife to lie down. But in vain; on the contrary she succeeded in driving him back to his bed. After a while, however, nature asserted her rights; the flesh proved stronger than the spirit, and a deep sleep, in spite of herself, overpowered the sorrowing mother. Her head sank back upon the chair, her hand relaxed its hold upon the cradle, and her feet ceased rocking.

"A drink!" suddenly exclaimed the sick child after a while, half awaking from its feverish dream.

The mother heard not.

"A drink!" repeated Emily louder.

Her mother moved not.

And now the child having become thoroughly awake, rst out into a bitter fit of weeping; upon this the room or opened, and her brother Edward, a boy about four-n years old, hurried into the room half dressed.

"Be still, my little Emily!" he said, caressing her, "I ll give you a drink directly." And so saying, he ap-oached the lamp over which a cup of tea had been placed keep warm, and having first ascertained that it was of e right temperature for drinking, he gave it to the child.

Mother give it me!" cried Emily peevishly. "Mother n't now, Emily!" he said soothingly; "she is asleep, see, or mother is so very, very tired. She has been sitting with you for six long nights, and she is beside you w, look she is sitting there. Now then, drink, my le Emily."

The child eagerly swallowed the tea, and threw herself wn again in her little bed, and Edward began gently to k the cradle.

"Sing, sing!" entreated the little patient. Edward eyed and sang in a low voice,

Sleep, dearest, sleep!
Thy rest be calm and deep!
While angels from the azure skies,
Softly close those aching eyes,—
Sleep, dearest, sleep!

"Be still, you must not uncover yourself," said Edward reatingly: "or else you will catch cold and be worse n ever. Quick, put that little foot back under the lt, and keep that little breast well covered." And with

these words he carefully tucked the bed clothes round the patient.

"A drink," again began the child, "water, not tea!"

Edward obeyed her wish, and warmed her some water over the lamp. In this manner the night passed. The child could not sleep: and if she closed her eyes for a few minutes she would start suddenly, and be again wide awake.

Edward's whole employment consisted in reaching her something to drink, and in singing his lullaby.

During all this time their mother's sleep continued unbroken.

The morning had nearly begun to dawn when Emily became somewhat more composed. The heightened colour of her cheeks gradually faded, and at length gave place to a deadly paleness. The eyes continued longer closed, the breathing was less hurried, but heavy, and accompanied by rattling in the throat. A deep silence reigned throughout the sick chamber; the glimmering of the lamp became fainter and fainter, and threatened soon to be extinguished altogether. The murmuring wind blew the weathercocks upon the neighbouring houses backwards and forwards, with a harsh, creaking noise, and sighed so strangely in the chimney, as to excite in the boy's mind an undefined feeling of dread. Half dressed as he was, he shivered from cold. With trembling lips, he sang with fainter and fainter utterance. As he fixed his anxious looks upon his corpse-like sister, and became aware of her altered breathing, and her closed and sunken eyos, the thought fell with an insupportable weight upon his heart: "What! if the angels close my little sister's eyes for ever?" Sorrow completely overcame him; his throat became parched, and he *was obliged to* sob again and again before a flood of tears

burst forth and relieved his tightened breast. They had all loved the little, merry, intelligent child, so very, very dearly! Her every word, and laugh, and look, and movement, had afforded them delight. And must that mouth never again utter its lisped accents; that fair face never again break into roguish dimples; that blue eye lose for ever its laughing brightness; a horrid yellow coffin become Emily's cradle, and loathsome worms prey upon her tender limbs? Horrible thought!

As the clock struck five, Mrs. Winch suddenly started from her sleep. "Oh my God!" she exclaimed, excessively alarmed, "what have I done? I have been sleeping and neglecting my child!" And casting her eyes upon the pale countenance of her darling, she wrung her hands in an agony of grief and despair. "Do not be so distressed, dear Mother!" began Edward, concealing his own tears. "I have been here, and have paid attention to little Milly."

"But," exclaimed the mother, not yet relieved from her anxiety, "have you been here all the time? I do'nt know when I fell asleep, and how easily may my child have become uncovered, and have taken cold." Edward however allayed her fears upon this point, and thereby relieved her from a great load of anxiety. "Your thoughtfulness, my dear boy, may have saved us from a great misfortune," she said, much moved; "I should never have forgiven myself, if, through my neglect, I had caused my child's death. Thank you, my good Edward."

And Edward, full of joy at having won his mother's approbation, replied affectionately, "Have you not, dear mother, watched many a night by my bedside?" And as his mother nodded assent, he continued, "Well then, in watching for you, or rather for little Milly, I have only paid back a very small part of the great debt I owe you."

He then left the room to go and finish dressing himself, that he might be useful to his mother during the day; who in consequence of the number of men whom they expected would be quartered upon them, had more than enough to occupy her time and thoughts.

CHAPTER II.

The Billetting.

"Of all things I should like to be a soldier!" began Robert, Edward's brother, a boy of eight years old, to his sister Bertha, who was one year older, as they were laying the cloth upon the long table ready for the soldiers' dinner. "What good dinners they always get! Every day is Sunday with them. Have you been in the kitchen, and seen the delicious roast veal, so rich and brown? And Edward has been fetching twenty cans of beer, and ever so much spirits besides; and I never saw in my life such a monstrous dish of potatoes. I hope the Frenchmen will leave some, for I love potatoes above all things."

"And the large, fresh baked loaves of bread" added Bertha, "and five whole rolls of yellow butter."

"And lots of cheese besides!" enumerated Robert in continuation; "Why! they must be famous eaters if they can finish all."

At this moment a noise was heard in the street. "They are coming, they are coming!" exclaimed Bertha, looking out of the window. The French were indeed coming. In another momont the clang of their weapons, and the heavy tread of their footsteps were heard entering the house, and the children scampered off.

The soldiers noisily took possession of the room set apart for them. Knapsacks and muskets, caps and side-arms were hastily thrown aside, and in a very few minutes the unbidden guests had ransacked every corner of the house, singing and whistling as if they had been at home there for years.

In the meantime the maid-servant and one of the apprentices were busy in serving up the food and liquor that had been provided for the soldiers. Not altogether without envy could Robert behold the savoury roast, the smoking potatoes, and the foaming cans of beer pass before him on their way to the dining room. Edward, whom his father had instructed in French, was dispatched to summon the dispersed soldiers, with the words, "Gentlemen, dinner is ready!" The call was immediately obeyed. As soon as Mr. and Mrs. Winch were aware by the rattle of knives and plates, that their guests were assembled, they withdrew with their children to their child's sick room, which had now become the common sitting room of the family.

Suddenly a terrible uproar was heard to proceed from the party at dinner.

"Bougre!—foudre!—sacre nom de Dieu!" several loud and furious voices were heard exclaiming together. The windows rattled, and panes fell shattered into the street, accompanied by some heavy falling bodies. Winch hastily left the room, while his wife, much terrified, ran to look out of the window. She was still in time to see copious streams of beer pouring from the windows of the room, in which the soldiers were quartered, followed by a cannonade of lumps of cheese; the heavy loves of rye bread coming thundering after them like mill stones; while poor Robert stood weeping with a mixture of sorrow and anger, as he recognized, among the shattered dishes, the much prized roast veal, surrounded by a melancholy band of crushed potatoes. In hurrying to the scene of confusion, Mr. Winch ran against the maidservant, who was crying bitterly, her face flushed with indignation, and a little further on he was just in time to catch his appren-

ice in his arms, whom some force behind, not very gentle apparently, had sent flying through the door.

A scene like this would have stirred up the wrath of the best of men. The eyes of master and man sparkled with rage. They raised their clenched fists, and would gladly have fallen upon the perpetrators of this wanton outrage. But they were only two, while there were twenty of their opponents, armed besides with deadly weapons.

"Edward!" exclaimed Mr. Winch, in a voice which trembled with rage, "Quick, run to head quarters, and lay a complaint against these villains. Beg one of the officers to come back with you."

Edward obeyed and scampered off on his errand. During his absence the uproar among the soldiers increased, but Winch and his people took care to keep out of their sight. After a while Edward came back breathless and alone.

"Well," asked his father eagerly, "has no officer come with you?"

"Oh, father!" replied Edward, "there is no redress to be had there. When I told them my errand, all the answer I got was, 'It will never do for the sake of so trifling a matter as that, to resort to strong measures against the troops, who after a long march, had a right to expect a good dinner.' So saying, the gentleman turned his back upon me, and left me without hearing another word I had to say. And imagine what I saw besides, —it is really scandalous! Just now a large body of Rhenish troops have entered the town. Bath street was crowded with them; and while there, before they were sent to their different quarters, they were drawn up to receive their rations of fresh baked ammunition bread. And what *do* you think the godless rascals did? They

laid the loaves one against another in a long row across the dirty street; and then laughing stepped upon them, to save, as they said, their shoes from getting soiled. Some of them tore out the inside of the loaves, and then drew them on their feet, like over-shoes, and in that manner went slurring through the mud. The scoundrels! To misuse God's gifts in such a shameful manner!"

Parents and children gazed at each other as if stupified, at this tale of wanton outrage. Winch at length said: "If our own countrymen behave in such a manner, we need not wonder if foreigners are no better."

"No indeed! no indeed!" said his wife. "On that account take it quietly, and let wrong be right for once. We will go and make inquiries what these fellows really have had to complain of in their food. It is after all better to come to an understanding with them, than let them insult and ill treat us. And does'nt it look, as if God would comfort us in another way. Just observe our little Emily, what a favourable change has taken place in her. Her breathing is now regular and natural, and all that restless anxiety has quite left her. Indeed the doctor when he came not long since, gave me the best hopes of her recovery. 'The child,' he said, 'had arrived at a very favourable crisis of the complaint, and danger had almost as good as disappeared. Only we must take care that her sleep be not too suddenly disturbed.' Does not this news repay you a thousand times for the money these greedy foreigners will cost you?"

Her husband assented. He drew near to the cradle of his child, and joyfully gazed upon her as she slept. Then went cheerfully away to take measures for supplying, out of his hard earned means, a more luxurious meal for his fastidious and unreasonable guests.

Suddenly the house door was beset by a fresh arrival of warriors.

"A Drummer and fifteen soldiers of the Rhine regiment!" gasped forth the maid, holding out to her affrighted master with trembling hand, the billetting order.

"Oh, merciful heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Winch, wringing her hands. "Have we not trouble enough, without this new infliction?"

But complaining here was of no use; measures on the contrary must be promptly taken, for the new comers impatiently demanded to be shewn into a room. "Take them into the workshop," said Winch, after considering for a moment. "I will rather give my men a holiday, than expose my sick child to the danger of a relapse." And his wife, committing the care of Emily to Bertha and Robert, hurried into the kitchen to make hasty preparations for the entertainment of the new guests.

While busied with these cares, she heard the sound of approaching heavy footsteps, and loud voices mingled with oaths. She listens. She distinctly hears these German soldiers press up stairs, into her sick child's chamber, and with the swiftness of an arrow rushes forth to save her child, her heart's dearest treasure, from the rude intrusion.

Led by the drummer, the soldiers had pushed noisily into the room, when Mrs. Winch, with clasped hands, threw herself before them.

"Do you stupid people think," exclaimed the brutal drummer, addressing her, "that we are dogs, that you can thrust into any miserable hole you like? Not so, I promise you. The boasting Frenchmen are to be accommodated with the best room in the house, while we Germans and countrymen, are to be content with a rubbish place in the yard. What, are you fellows any better than we

are, I wonder? Do'nt we too shed our blood for you in battle? Here we stop, comrades, and the devil himself sha'nt drive us out."

"Oh good people," entreated the wretched mother, in a low, suppressed voice, "take pity on my poor sick child there, who now for the first time these six days enjoys a quiet sleep. I only implore you to be still and peaceable, and you shall have every thing you want. What! is there no father amongst you, who can understand and enter into my feelings? Is there not one amoug you who has left a child at home, that he often thinks of and longs to see again? No, I cannot think you will kill my little one."

While her lips uttered these words with trembling eagerness, her hands were employed in relieving the soldiers of their arms and knapsacks, and piling them with the smallest possible noise in one corner. She then earnestly repeated her prayer that they would have some consideration for her sick child, and hurried back to the kitchen, after again commending to her two older children the charge of Emily.

For a time the soldiers remained tolerably still. They drew their chairs round the large table and talked with each other in an under tone. The brutal drummer at length began to find the absence of their hostess, and the interval before the appearanee of the eagerly looked for dinner, too long for his growing impatience. He muttered between his teeth rude oaths, which in time were changed into loud expressions of dissatisfaction. "What are these stupid people about that they dont bring dinner?" he exclaimed fiercely. "Aye, if we were Frenchmen they would manage to move a little quicker. Who knows but they are scraping up the rubbish that has just been thrown out of the window into the street, and mean to

make us a dinner out of that. After wanting to stow us into yon dogkennel in the yard, I could give that woman credit for anything. But wait a bit, and I'll find means to quicken her! It's well I know her sore place!" And so saying he cast a furious look at the innocent child, who still, notwithstanding this loud speech, continued to slumber sweetly. Like two guardian angels, Robert and Bertha stood watching by the sick child's bed. Anxiously and fearfully they gazed at the fierce soldier, whose grey eyes gleamed with savage cruelty. But when they saw him push his chair close to Emily's cradle and seize hold of his drum, their young faces became white with terror. Incapable of uttering a sound, they bent with outstretched arms over the little sleeper, and gazed at the barbarian with terrified and imploring looks. But the drummer either could not, or would not understand this silent, though eloquent, language of the affections. With a diabolical laugh he compressed the drum between his knees, and flourishing the sticks, said sneeringly, "That little wretch there won't quite die outright, I fancy, if I just quicken its mother's movements a little!"

Oh war! thou bloody monster! What thousand new and fiend-like passions dost thou drag forth upon the arena of this sad and tear-stained life! Oh war, that impelest men to be murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, of brethren, and of children, and callest such murder good, and crownest it with rewards; changing man, God's image, into the bloodthirsty tiger, the merciless fiend! Oh war! who darest to sing thy impious Te Deums over the graves of slaughtered innocents; when, O when wilt thou cease to cover with reproach the name of Christianity?

Fathers! Mothers! who may read this story, can you conceive, what my pen scarcely has the power to write?

It is no invention, no lie; for woe be the writer, who could allow his imagination such satanic play!

Look here, how sweetly slumbers little Emily close beside that lurking hyæna! The little hands unconsciously folded over the gently heaving bosom! The tremulous breathing, as it leaves the delicately formed mouth, falling upon the ear like the hushed low play of the summer's breeze among the long grass; and those wavy, golden locks, flowing round that cherub face, lightly tinged with the glow of returning health! All this was seen too by that rude soldier, and more than this; there were also two pair of faithful, loving eyes, filled with intense anxiety, imploring mercy for their sleeping sister; and yet, and yet, his cruel hands were still capable of beating a thundering tattoo upon his drum!

Human life! woven of a spider's thread, why art thou then so frail! A breath of wind falls rudely upon thy wondrously reared fabric, and like the floating bubble, thou vanishest in a moment! The fall of two worthless bits of wood upon a piece of parchment, was sufficient to convert a smiling angel into the dread-inspiring image of death! One moment, and that fair temple of God is in ruins, which for many hundred days and nights, it had been the labour of love of two fond parents to tend and to preserve!

A cry of horror escaped the lips of the two watching children, as they heard the thunder of the drum. The infant started up in a wild affright. She opened her blue eyes wide, and stared at the strange bearded man, whose hands had produced these fearful sounds. In another moment the little pupils were turned upwards in their sockets,—a livid hue overspread the fair countenance—and the convulsive struggles of death began. The door

flies open. Is that a lioness robbed of her young, and rushing in pursuit of the spoiler? Like a maniac, with face, white as death itself, with loosened hair, and wildly rolling eyes, the mother burst into the room. Her tightened breast can give forth no cry. Dumb with agony, she throws herself on her knees before the drummer, and seizes his murderous hands. Her glance then falls upon her child—dying! She lifts it out of its cradle—she holds it aloft in her arms—air! air! will she procure for it. A warm gush of tears falls upon its livid countenance—she kisses the blue lips—she calls her darling by the most endearing names—vain endeavour to arrest the departure of that fleeting life!

The death struggle was soon over. The tender limbs became stiff, and the child's heart stood still for ever. Uttering a wild cry the mother fell senseless to the ground, with her murdered child in her arms. In the next moment she was followed by the drummer, pierced by the father's hand, who had entered the room immediately after his wife, and now wrought vengeance on the murderer. For a considerable time, the half-maddened parent continued to defend himself with the weapons he had seized in his emergency, against the soldiers, who crowded upon him, and it was only after a severe struggle, that he was at length secured and put under arrest.

a man, carrying an infant's coffin, unde
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He was followed on foot by a woman
ourning; after them came three childre
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g-ground. The gates swung back with
und to admit the mournful party, whos
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of white grave-stones and black crosse
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ed torches,—the gaunt figure of the l
his ruthless scythe,—and weeping statu
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reading their way through numberle

bed, before the eyes of her brothers and sister. In the little clasped hands was a nosegay of fresh gathered flowers, and a wreath of roses encircled her fair brow. The eyes, but little sunk and only half closed, gave to the round smiling face, the appearance of a sleeping angel. Scarcely in life had she ever looked so lovely as now in death; and the suppressed sobs of her brothers and sister were changed, on beholding her, into a loud cry of grief. Scarcely knowing what he did, Edward stroked with his trembling hands the cheek of the little sister he had so fondly, so dearly loved, but started back, when it met his touch cold and hard like marble. The woman then spoke to them admonishingly: "Let the dead rest in peace! Disturb her not; it is well with her!"

The coffin lid fell to; the ceremony proceeded, and the grave, in which already reposed the grandparents of the children, and a little brother, only ten days old, received its new prey. After they had seen the earth heaped over the resting place of their darling Emily, the children still weeping left the burying ground. On their way, Bertha broke the silence by saying: "If only mother does not die too! The doctor says, that in such a violent fever, people don't live very long." "Oh dear!" said Robert, evidently much alarmed, "if the soldiers should really do what they threaten, and shoot poor father, what would then become of us? We should then either have to go into the workhouse, or beg our bread in the streets."

To all this Edward made no remark. He walked on in silence, apparently sunk in deep thought. In a little time however, he stopped suddenly, and said, "Bertha, what was that text you had to learn last Saturday?"

Bertha stared at her brother in wonder, and then asked in return, "What good can the text do?"

"I want to know what it was!" replied Edward, almost in a tone of impatience. Bertha considered for a moment and then said, "It was this, 'We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.'"

"Right!" nodded Edward, "do you understand? Even for our brethren we ought to lay down our lives—how much more for our parents!" He paused for a few minutes. A struggle was evidently taking place in his mind; he then said quite calmly: "Robert! I make you a present of my two Indian turtle-doves. They are now yours. But be sure you take good care of them. Don't forget to give them fresh water and plenty of corn every day. In my drawer there is a whole paper full, and when that is done, buy corn proper for Indian doves, but with no wheat among it."

"What!" exclaimed Robert, forgetting his sorrows for the moment in his joy at this unlooked for present, "you will make me a present of your pigeons that you are so fond of, your heart's delight as you call them!"

"I shall never take delight in any thing again," replied Edward sighing. "My darling Milly is dead. My Mother is dying, and to-morrow my Father may be shot. What use are the pigeons to me!" Again he paused; "If my mother should get well again, and my father be set at liberty, tell them they are not to be angry with me. I could not have done differently, and acted as the Bible tells us. And you, Bertha, must repeat the text to my father and mother very often, you know which I mean. You can tell them too, that I did'nt feel it at all hard; that I gave up my life for them very willingly—I mean that I was very glad to follow little Milly."

"You follow Milly?" exclaimed his brother and sister *in great alarm.* "What do you mean by that?"

"Hush! only be quiet," returned Edward, "you will soon know. Only promise me not to mention it to my mother, until she is quite well."

The children gave him their word, and they then proceeded homewards, something less sad than when they set out. Edward went immediately to the bedside of his mother, who was raving in the delirium of fever. He took hold of her burning hand, and covered it with his tears. His heart felt as if it would break. O! it would have been so consolatory to him, could he have made known to her his secret resolution. Alas, she was no longer his kind, tender mother, but a raving maniac, obliged to be held down upon her bed by force. As her wild glance fell upon her son, dressed in his mourning clothes, she cried out with a terrible voice, "There comes the black fiend, with the enormous beard, and the horrid drum! Send him away! Send him away, or my husband will strike him dead!" Quite overpowered by his emotions, poor Edward rushed out of the room.

"Stand back!" said the sentinel, who mounted guard before the prison in which Winch languished, as Edward attempted to approach the entrance.

"It is my father," said Edward, "I should so much like to see him."

"Can't be!" answered the sentinel roughly.

"I entreat you for God's sake!" implored Edward, the tears running down his cheeks. "Let me go to him. I want to bid him good bye."

"Cant be!" repeated the soldier. "Besides what use would your visit be to him. A bottle of wine would do him a vast deal more good. One might strengthen his knees a bit for his last march, while the other would only drown the little courage he may have left."

In the meantime several persons had gathered round and become listeners to the conversation; by-and-by murmurs were heard among them.

"Shameful!" exclaimed one—"they wont even let the boy see his father!"

"If I had been in Winch's place," said another, "I should have just done the same."

"Knock that insolent rascal down!" demanded a third.

The soldier cast an uneasy glance at the rapidly increasing crowd, and then said in a more subdued tone: "I have strict orders to allow no one to have access to the prisoner. If the lad wants to see his father, he must get permission from the colonel."

Following the hint thus given, Edward directed his course, the crowd still following at his heels, to the quarters of the commanding officer of the regiment, which was distinguished by having two sentinels before the door. Leaving his followers to digest their curiosity in the street, as best they might, Edward stepped boldly into the house, and soon came to an apartment, filled with officers. They stood in detached groups engaged in lively conversation with each other, and quite unmindful of the strange boy, who in no little embarrassment gazed round in search of the colonel. Suddenly, the door of an adjoining room was thrown open, the officers drew back and silently formed into a large circle, into the midst of which stepped a stout red-faced warrior, covered with glittering orders.

Edward turned pale, as he saw himself standing alone in the middle of the circle, and in the presence of the dreadful colonel; he advanced however a step nearer, and said with a firm voice: "Please your excellency! it is written in the Bible, that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. I have therefore come to beg of you to *let me be shot instead* of my father."

At this unexpected address, the colonel involuntarily stepped back in utter astonishment. Measuring the boy from head to foot, he replied: "How? what? let you be shot? Potz tausend!" laughing, he then continued, "with dumplings I suppose, eh?"

"Please your excellency!" said Edward, while the tears fell from his eyes, "there is no jest at all in the matter to me. I am come in serious earnest to offer myself to be shot instead of my father."

The colonel at this also became serious:—he then proceeded to cross examine the boy, who, in truthful and touching terms, described the sorrowful situation of his parents. The colonel and his officers began to feel embarrassed, for they could not but be ashamed of the conduct of their comrade, the savage and inhuman drummer.

Stroking his bushy moustachios from time to time, the colonel turned to the surrounding company and said, "A very awkward case, I must confess! On account of the bad example, it would never do to set the lad's father at liberty. Our people for the future would hardly dare to stir a finger, if we let this man go unscathed; on the contrary, it will be necessary to hold a court martial, and his life may become the forfeit of his rash act; more especially should the drummer not recover of his wound, which is very doubtful. At the same time I must say I pity the poor fellow, were it only for the sake of his brave lad. The time is too short to make an appeal to the royal mercy; in two days the regiment must march, the drummer's place be supplied and—stop! I have a plan!"—He turned to Edward, who stood in trembling expectation of hearing the sentence of life or death. "So, you are really willing to let yourself be shot instead of your father? That is no *trifling* matter I assure you, however trippingly it may

fall from the tongue. When the cold blue balls come crashing among one's bones, one sings then to another tune." Here the colonel looked keenly at Edward, who nodded his head in token that he still adhered to his resolution.

"Supposing," continued the former, "that the man does not die, whom your father struck down, perhaps I may save you from being shot. But in that case you must supply the place of the disabled drummer and march with the regiment in two days. Are you ready and willing to do that?"

"Become a drummer!" exclaimed Edward, clasping his hands together in the utmost terror. "Any thing in the world, only not that. I could never dare to appear before my mother's eyes again. Since Milly's death she has had the greatest horror of drums and drummers. I believe the very name would be almost enough to send her into a fit."

The colonel became almost angry. "Now just look at the young rascal!" he said impatiently, "I mean so well to him, and he does not even say thank you. Harkee my lad! I gave you credit for having more sense. If you let yourself be shot, why, you can *never* appear again before your mother's eyes. But if you agree to don uniform and carry drum, then whether you see her or not, you can still be her dutiful son. And do you imagine that your father will owe you any thanks, or enjoy the life you have saved for him, if it is purchased by your own?"

"Indeed, indeed!" replied Edward in great distress, "I will do any thing in the world to save my dear father. I will even be a drummer, if you decline to let me be shot."

Neither the colonel nor his officers could altogether refrain from laughing at the boy's speech.

"Well then," said the former, "we are agreed. There are still, however, some conditions which I must require of you. In the first place your father does not receive his liberty until the drummer is out of danger, and the regiment has left the town. In the second, you must neither see nor hold any communication with your father; for this I have the very best grounds. Why should you needlessly increase the sorrows of separation by the painful ceremony of leave taking. You stop now where you are. I shall place you under the charge of my old sergeant Hoyer, who, I have no doubt, will be a good father to you. During the two days we shall yet remain here, you must take all possible pains to learn how to drum, that at least you don't put the others out."

The thanks which he wished to express died upon Edward's lips. He was not at all satisfied at having to enter upon the drummer's hateful calling,—in his then excited state of mind, he would really much rather have been shot.

CHAPTER IV.

Edward goes to the Wars.

Edward drummed till his arms ached. His master was perfectly satisfied with his progress; only at times he found it necessary to give him a gentle tap upon the shoulder with the drumsticks, when the boy giving way for the moment to his thoughts, made too long a pause. Each time when this occurred, he started, drew the sleeve of his new jacket hastily across his eyes, and then drummed away with all his might. The first time he beat the fatal tattoo, a shudder passed through his whole frame. He thought of his little murdered sister, and of his poor mother, still on the brink of the grave. Quickly enough came the dreaded morning, on which the regiment, and Edward with it, was to leave the town.

Very early in the morning, the old sergeant, Hoyer, instructed Edward how to pack his knapsack, so as to make the best possible use of the room. His mind occupied with far different matters, the boy could only nod assent to whatever was said to him. Alas, his aching heart was every whit as full as the knapsack he was to bear upon his shoulders. The command was now given for the troops to form in order of march. As Edward was still a novice, and the colonel wished to avoid observation being attracted towards him, he was not allowed to beat his drum with the rest. At length he marched out of his quarters at Hoyer's side. As they passed the house of his parents, his heart filled almost to bursting. Robert and Bertha were looking out of the windows upstairs, and behind them stood the maid-servant and the apprentices and

workmen. But the window of that room in which his sick mother lay, was carefully darkened.

Edward lifted up his streaming eyes; and carried away by his grief, he stretched out his arms and exclaimed with a loud voice; "Remember me to my father, and my mother! Good bye! All of you; Good bye!"

"Edward! Edward!" resounded in heart-piercing tones from the window. His brother and sister, the maid, the apprentices all broke forth in loud lamentations. Quick as lightning every head disappeared from the window. No doubt they were all hurrying down stairs to embrace Edward once again. But Hoyer dragged his charge hastily along with him. "Silly work!" he said angrily, though not unaffected himself; "why make more trouble for yourself than necessary. March along, forwards!"

They walked quickly to the market-place, which was the rallying point of the regiment.

While on their way however, Edward heard repeated more than once: "That is young Winch!" "That is the good son, who goes to the wars that he may save his father's life." "Good bye, my brave little fellow!" exclaimed one voice after another, until he was lost among the crowd of his new associates. Shortly afterwards, the drummers received orders to advance to the head of the regiment. Immediately upon having executed this movement, they saw themselves surrounded by hundreds of spectators, the greater portion of whom were children; who all, old and young, began shouting out; "Edward Winch!" "Where is he?" "Noble little fellow!" "Dutiful son!" "And these call themselves friends too! Pretty friends!" "Edward! Edward Winch!"

Suddenly a passage was forcibly made in the crowd. A number of people came working their way through, ut-

tering loud exclamations. They were the apprentices, the maid, and Edward's brother and sister. Amid loud weeping they fell upon his neck. Not one of them was able, for sorrow, to utter an intelligible word. Old and young were moved to tears at beholding this scene.

Edward sobbing pressed his brother and sister to his heart—his eyes swam in tears, and every object round him seemed swimming likewise.

"Forwards! March!" thundered the Colonel in a stentorian voice. The drummers struck up a fearful din. Before Edward's eyes every thing seemed dark. He felt himself forcibly dragged from his sister's embrace, and hurried from the spot. So swinging his drum before him, he seized the sticks with a convulsive effort, and drummed away to drown his grief.

His heart seemed as if it had taken leave of his body. There, where it should have been, he felt an inexpressibly dreary void, and a dull heavy pain, as though he had received a wound. He tramped however, though almost unconsciously, along with the rest, until they had left the town some distance behind them. Here, upon a rising ground, the Regiment made a short halt. The soldiers drew forth their canteens, and washed down their dry rations with fiery draughts.

"Drink, my little fellow, drink," said Edward's neighbour, offering him his flask, "this is the real water of the river Lethe, which makes us forget every sorrow. Drink, comrade!"

With a silent gesture, Edward declined the proffered flask, and again directed his eyes towards his native town lying in the valley beneath. There it lay, glittering in the bright sunbeams, the home of all his earthly joys. "Shall I ever see thee again?" he sighed sadly to himself.

"As a miserable cripple perhaps! And my dear parents, and Robert and Bertha, shall I ever have the happiness to fold you again in my arms? My precious home, alas, I never prized thee so much as now when I am about to leave thee perhaps for ever. Farewell, a long farewell; God bless you all, you dear ones! Think sometimes upon Edward, do not quite forget him!" Silently he dried the unbidden tears that rushed to his eyes, that they might not be seen by his comrades, and expose him to their ridicule. These were laughing and jesting as gaily as if they were marching to a fair instead of to battle. And yet most of them, no doubt, had left behind them beloved relations who trembled and offered up prayers for the lives which were so soon to be exposed to the rude stroke of war. Above him, the lark sang merrily in the blue sky, as if she too were mocking his grief. By a powerful effort he at length mastered his agony:—

> "To idle, anxious grief,
> God never sends relief;
> It must be sought by prayer!"

Thus he whispered to himself: and lo! as he thus fixed his thoughts earnestly upon God and His ever-present help, he felt as if endued with new strength and new life. His tears ceased to flow, the aching pain at his heart gradually passed away, the love of life returned apace, and fresher and more invigorated than his comrades after their dram, he rose up to pursue his march.

CHAPTER V.

"How merrily we live, that soldiers be!"

Thus had Edward several times heard his comrades singing. "Very odd!" he would say to himself, "I would much rather sing just the opposite, 'how merrily they live, that no soldiers be!' And I have always seen that every recruit that has joined the regiment has looked sad, very sad indeed. I must take notice, and see which is right."

He had not long to wait before he learned one of the pleasures of a soldier's life. He soon enough found the unaccustomed weight of his knapsack an intolerable burden. Back, shoulders, and breast ached violently beneath the pressure, which was considerably increased by the drum. It was much worse, however, for the other recruits who had continually to bear a heavy fire-lock in their arms or upon their shoulders. Another evil was the clouds of dust in which the regiment had to march upon the high road. In a very short time their dark uniforms were as white as if they had been powdered with flour; instead of inhaling the pure air, dust was forced into the nose and mouth, choking and parching up the throat and lungs. They did, it is true, occasionally on their way meet with springs of water, whose clear bubbling streams the thirsty soldiers drank in imagination long before they reached them; only very few of them, however, were permitted to quit the ranks and replenish their flasks, the rest were obliged to march past unsatisfied, and without a murmur. Bathed in sweat, tortured with pain, faint and weary, Edward arrived at length with his companions

at the village where they were directed to halt for their mid-day meal. It was already past one o'clock, and Edward had not tasted food that day. Hungry, however, as he was, he was still obliged to wait another full hour, until the roll had been called over, and the men distributed among the various farm-houses in the neighbourhood, where preparations had already been made for the arrival of the announced, though unbidden guests. No sooner had Edward, with twenty of his companions, entered the spacious kitchen of the farm-house on which they had been billetted, than the smoking meal was immediately served up. The cloth was already laid, plates, knives and forks lay upon the table, with abundance of bread, butter, and cheese; spirits and beer had also been supplied. To these were now added an enormous dish of boiled dumplings, and another of smoked bacon. As soon as the soldiers had laid aside their arms and knapsacks they seated themselves at the table; their host, with his wife and children, and the servant maid, taking their places behind their strange guests to await their further wishes. The old farmer then uncovered his venerable head, and himself and his family folded their hands, expecting the soldiers to say grace before commencing their meal. But only Edward, the novice, who had been always accustomed to ask God's blessing at home, uttered half aloud his usual grace; the others without further preface fell upon the victuals which had been provided in the greatest abundance. It was not long, however, before a loud uproar arose. Edward's comrades swore fearfully at the hard dumplings, and the tough flavourless meat. One likened the first to a lot of four-pounders, while another threatened to bombard the host's head with them. In vain the good woman of the house represented that it

the very w
companions his share of the well-
allowed his thoughts to dwell with
the prospect of a refreshing draugh
sive hope! It proved to be sour
new cause of disturbance as soon
discovered by the rest.

"Good sirs!" pleaded the farmer,
summer through we have had nothi
beer as this, which we have to pay
was the best. Call our masters to
such stuff upon us."

"Thank your stars," replied one of
we are Germans, and not Frenchmen.
flung the beer in your faces, and mad
instead!" "They that have no wine,
returned the farmer, "and where th
king himself can claim nothing."

alone remained quietly in the house. As soon as he saw that he was left sitting by himself at the table, his sorrows again returned with new force upon his mind. The thought of his parents filled him with anxiety, and the desire to know something respecting their state grew all the more intense from the improbability of its being gratified. Sunk in thought, he leaned his head upon his hand, till he was aroused from his melancholy musings by the angry voices of the farmer and his people in the yard, disputing the right of the guests to take possession of what they liked. Edward blushed for his comrades, and he was just on the point of going out to reason with them on their disgraceful conduct, when a child's cry was heard issuing from behind the stove. He followed the sound, and found a child lying in a cradle, not unlike, as he thought, his little sister Emily. Forgetting his previous purpose, he lifted the infant out of its bed, and took it gently into his arms. At first the little one seemed disposed to cry all the louder at the sight of a strange form, but after a few kind and soothing words from Edward, she became still, gazed upon her new nurse with her large blue eyes, and at length began playing with his shoulder knot. Edward was delighted. Singing, he began to dance up and down the room with his little burden. Suddenly its mother entered; her sullen and angry countenance changed into smiles as soon as she perceived the young drummer's occupation.

"You seem to be the only lamb among the wolves," she began, "I saw that at once, by your not neglecting to say grace, and sitting so still and peaceably at dinner. Eh! do but look at that little damsel, how kindly she takes to the lad. You've got such a little sister as that at home, I'll answer for it?"

"I had," replied Edward, sorrowfully, "but my predecessor drummed it to death."

"Drummed it to death!" repeated the woman, horror-struck. "How did that happen? do tell me!"

Edward was about to tell her, when the drum was heard in the distance.

"There goes my signal!" he said hastily, "I must be off, and beat up my comrades."

"Wait just one minute!" begged his hostess, and hastily quitting the room, she returned almost immediately bringing with her a plateful of fine ripe cherries; "Here" she she said, "take these and eat them when you like, for you have got them honestly;" she filled his pockets and his cap, relieved him of the little one, and then dismissed him with a hearty blessing.

Satisfied with himself, and on that account far less sad then he had felt a few minutes before, Edward lustily beat his drum, and, ere long, was again marching at the head of his regiment. The heat and the thirst soon became as oppressive as before. And then how welcome did Edward find the good dame's parting gift! They proved the very best refreshment he could have had, and carefully husbanded, served him the rest of the weary march, until towards evening they entered the town, fixed upon as their quarters for the night. After the day's fatigue the men revelled in the prospect of a good supper and a comfortable bed; and could scarcely wait with patience until they got their quarters assigned them. Laughing and joking they set off for them as soon as the necessary orders had been distributed, and while waiting until their suppers were got ready, they employed themselves in brushing the dust off their uniforms, cleaning their arms, shaving and washing. Several opened their knapsacks, and

brought to light the various articles of the day's plunder. First one ran into the kitchen with half a dozen eggs, and ordered for himself a dish of pancakes; and another brought forth a pair of strangled pigeons, a third a fowl, which each intended to have cooked for provision for the next day. Amid shouts of triumph a fourth produced a beheaded goose, thereby exciting in no small degree the envy of his companions.

"This gabbling fool," he said laughing, "came hissing at me open mouthed, as I was trying to push through the palings. You just come in the nick of time, I said to myself, and, without more ado, struck her head clean off. She'll be pretty fat, I fancy, at least she was heavy enough to carry." So the poor goose was sent along with the rest into the kitchen to be roasted.

The people of the house readily supplied whatever their larders contained. The victuals which they now hastened to serve up to their guests, secured beforehand, by their pleasant and savoury odours, a hearty welcome. Good roast beef, with vegetables, foaming, sparkling ale, and various other dishes filled up the long table. Happy as kings, the men seated themselves in readiness for the attack. Just as they were lifting the first morsel to their mouths, the door was hastily thrown open, and a young officer, with jingling spurs, burst into the room. "Drummer!" he shouted—"quick! beat to quarters!"

These few words petrified the soldiers. They sat motionless as statues. Each hand as if at the word of command sunk with knife and fork upon the table, and every eye was fixed in a horrified gaze upon the Job's messenger.

Hoyer, the sergeant, was the first to recover himself sufficiently to say to the officer: "Do you really mean, Lieutenant, that the men are to set out again after one day's march?"

"I never jest with my inferiors," replied the lieutenant stiffly. "Such behaviour does not consist with my dignity. Mark that if you please! And when you have any thing to say to your superior officer, it would beseem you better to rise from your seat. Have'nt you learnt that yet. A pretty example to set your men! That is the reason I suppose of the clowns keeping their seats so contentedly in my presence. Donner wetter! I will teach you discipline!" Like a row of puppets the soldiers, Hoyer at their head, started to their feet. Without attempting a defence, the serjeant swallowed the lieutenant's galling words, though in age and experience he might very well have been his father. He stood still, erect, and without the slightest signs of anger or mortification in his countenance, which was only a little paler than usual. After the officer had ceased, Hoyer said with deference: "May the men be allowed to finish their dinner, sir?" "No," replied the officer, "it is intended for the French, who are about entering, and for whom we must make room. I shall remain here to see that nothing further be touched."

With sorrowful looks, the men bid farewell to their anticipated meal, and prepared for resuming their march. The once happy proprietor of the goose, however, bethought himself of the possibility of stealing into the kitchen, and securing his spoil.

"Where are you going?" exclaimed the officer observing his manœuvre.

"Into—the—kitchen!" stammered the man. "I only wanted to—"

"Leave it there," thundered the lieutenant.

He then became aware of Edward who, not yet having acquired a soldier's promptness, was left behind the rest.

"What, you here still"—and a rude oath disgraced the cer's lips, "pack yourself off this instant!" With these ls he half drew his sabre from its sheath. Edward was ng in finding the door and made off as fast as he could. is easy to see," said the soldiers among themselves rwards, "that the lieutenant has not smelt powder yet, or he would never blow up his men in that way. The jackanapes had better take care. He would'nt be the first officer who has received a bullet in battle from the wrong side of the hedge!" The village which had been really intended for the night quarters of the Rhenish troops, was distant a good three miles from the town they were obliged so suddenly to evactuate. It was not to be much wondered at therefore, that the men trudged this additional way in not the best temper in the world, more especially as a heavy thunder shower wetted them to the skin. For all this the poor country people, whose turn it was now to play the host, and who had but mean fare and beds of straw to offer, had to endure not a little from the disappointed troops.

As Edward stretched himself beside his comrades upon his hard and unaccustomed bed, he again went over in his mind, the delights of a soldier's life. Judging by what he had already experienced, they seemed to him scanty enough; most of all did he feel hurt at the humiliating treatment that his brave old sergeant had received from the arrogant and beardless lieutenant.

Comparing his present situation with his former one, the difference seemed as great as between earth and heaven. But what was the use of murmuring?

"To vain, repining grief
"God never sends relief;
"It must be won by prayer."

Thus thinking he fell asleep.

CHAPTER VI

Edward's Military Life.

Edward had fancied at first that he should not long be able to endure the hardships of a soldier's life; but in this he was mistaken. Every day his knapsack galled him less; he felt less fatigued after each hard day's march, and he suffered less and less from the heat and the dust. He could sleep now as well upon bare straw or hay, as formerly upon a feather bed; and each morning when he arose from his stinted rest, he felt as if endued with new life. The continued sojourning in the open air, and the constant exercise, rendered his blood light and his mind cheerful. He was happy without being able to give a reason why. By degrees he became better acquainted with his comrades and they with him; and he soon learned to perceive that it was less a depraved disposition, than the excitement of the moment, which betrayed them into acts of violence. He was most distressed, however, by the constant and fearful swearing. Not one, but was ashamed to pray; not one that was ashamed to curse. The smallest trifle was made the occasion of an oath, and God's name was impiously invoked, and His judgments imprecated, upon the slightest occasion. After a longer acquaintance with them, Edward ventured to express his horror at the practice.

As a soldier one day was brushing his uniform, he accidentally knocked off a button. Immediately he uttered a dreadful oath.

"Oh you wicked sinner! exclaimed Edward, unable to

contain himself, "on account of a miserable button you call upon God to damn you ?"

The man looked at him with astonishment.

"Don't be an ass," he said; "who would think of twisting a thing in that way ?"

"Why did'nt you say so yourself ?" replied Edward.

"Aye, but I did'nt mean it. It was only in joke," cried the other.

"Listen," said Edward. "Do you recollect how savage Lieutenant —— was, when poor Hoyer hinted something about joking. He soon gave him to understand that he must allow himself no such liberties. And yet the difference between him and our old Hoyer, is not so very very great. Neither would you, I fancy, allow much joking with your loaded musket. At the same time you think nothing of joking with the Lord of Lords, and that too about the most dreadful thing of all, damnation itself. It is frightful to think of."

The soldier endeavoured to force a laugh at Edward's reproof; but he took care for the future, at all events in the boy's presence, to abstain from this wicked oath. Through his own example, likewise, Edward effected some improvement in the rest of his companions. No one ever heard him murmuring at the weather, or at the hardships, bad fare, poor accommodation, or other evils which fall to a soldier's lot; no one ever saw him abuse the country-people, who had to entertain them, or take away their property. At the very outset he had secured the respect of the troops by his self-sacrificing love for his father, increased by his own exemplary conduct; while, besides this, the favour shewn him both by the Colonel and old sergeant Hoyer, gave him a certain standing in the company.

As soon as he found the necessary time and opportunity he wrote to his father as follows:

My Dear Father,

Our good Colonel has informed me that the wicked drummer, who murdered our dear little Milly, is quite recovered, and already on his way to join the regiment. Of course, therefore, you will have been set at liberty long ago, which rejoices me very much. If only I could be sure that my mother was well again, and had become consoled for poor Milly's death! On my account, neither you nor she need suffer any uneasiness. I am very well, and up to the present time have felt no ill consequences whatever from my new life. I have a very good friend and protector in the Colonel, and a real father in serjeant Hoyer. The life of a soldier is really not so bad as we all used to think it. We have not yet come in sight of the enemy. Indeed, we are yet only in Poland. As soon as we get into Russia, we shall see them, I fancy, quick enough. But don't let either mother or you make yourselves uneasy about it. Not every ball hits, as my old serjeant says, and over such a little fellow as I, they'll shoot clear away. Poland is, with the exception of the towns, a perfect land of swine. Only think; the houses of the country people have none of them chimnies; so that they are continually filled with a thick suffocating smoke, which makes its escape through small air holes in the walls, about two yards above the floor. The manure, instead of being carried straight away to the fields, is thrown up in great heaps about the house, which in consequence is always surrounded by an abominable stinking pool. Upon these manure heaps, whole rows of children may be seen squatting, so that they really do grow up *like pigs. One* can't look upon them or their parents

either without a feeling of disgust. Their skins are covered with a thick coating of dirt, and they all swarm with vermin. How the French will wonder when they come to such quarters! For myself, I must say, I would much rather bivouack in the open air, which indeed I have done already several times. Wrapped up in one's great cloak, one lies down with the knapsack for a pillow, the clear sky with its thousands of twinkling stars for a covering, and the cool morning wind to awake one at dawn. This is a rather rough sort of waking I confess, and sometimes makes one's teeth chatter and limbs tremble more than is pleasant; and it requires one to swallow a good tolerable dram, to avoid carrying the ague away with one. But except at these times I never take spirits. Neither have I learned to swear or to smoke tobacco, for which I get not a little laughed at by my comrades. Praying and going to church is not much in fashion with soldiers, but I never forget to say my prayers night and morning, and to ask a blessing at my meals. I don't think it's likely that I shall get my discharge, for the Colonel says, that a great many men will be wanted soon; so I have quite made up my mind to stop if it must be so. I sadly want to know how you are all at home, but it is very doubtful whether a letter would reach me, as we make no stay at any place.

And now, dear Father, I must conclude; give my best love to my Mother, as well as Bertha and Robert, not forgetting Hannah, and the apprentices.

I will write again as soon as I can. Till then, good bye!

Your affectionate Son,

EDWARD.

This letter, as may be imagined, caused an indescribable joy in Mr. Winch's family. The parents first shed tears of

delight, at possessing so good a son, and then of grief, at having to be deprived of him. His brother and sister danced about the house clapping their hands; old Hannah smirked with evident satisfaction that she too was mentioned in the letter, and the workmen were loud in their praise of Edward's noble sentiments. The letter made the circuit of the whole town. At first Winch was resolved to follow the army and purchase his son's discharge at any price; and it was only the urgent solicitations of his friends, who represented to him the utter impracticability of accomplishing his purpose, and his unwillingness to leave his wife alone during such disturbed and dangerous times, that induced him to abandon his purpose.

CHAPTER VII.

The grand Army.

It was in the summer of the year 1812, that the French host passed the Russian frontier. It consisted of a force never equalled in modern times, and fully furnished with all the munitions of war. It numbered half a million warriors, 80,000 of whom were cavalry, and 1200 pieces of artillery. Auxiliaries from almost every nation in Europe swelled its numbers. Austrians, Prussians, Bavarians, Westphalians; troops from Wurtermburg, from Saxony, Baden, Holland, and Italy, were to be seen in their showy and varied uniforms. Well might the heart of Napoleon leap in his breast, as this mighty host passed before him.

Truly it was a magnificent spectacle! Broad as a giant stream, and closely crowded together, the blue clad infantry regiments marched majestically along. At their head the clanging, spirit-stirring music, then the deafening drums, after them a company of carpenters, three a-breast with white leathern aprons, and glittering axes. All had one step, one attitude, one motion. The soldiers, their long bayonets glancing in the sunbeams, passed onwards like moving walls. Above them, instead of waving banners, soared golden eagles, with wide spread wings, as if taking the host under their protection. Distinguished from all the rest by their enormously high bearskin caps, which gave them the appearance of gigantic savages, were the Imperial Guards, though even they were exceeded in beauty by the Dutch Guards, whose uniform of the finest white cloth was much too good for service in the field. But it was by *the masses* of cavalry that the most powerful effect

was produced. Among them were several regiments of mounted riflemen, in green uniforms turned up with red. A strip of fur, resembling a tiger's skin, bordered the glittering gilded helmet, from which streamed a horse's tail. After them came the hussars, in their richly braided jackets, broad and somewhat low bear-skin caps, with long scarlet bags, embroidered with gold, hanging out of them. Then followed the cuirassiers, breast and back protected by burnished armour, which glittered like plates of silver; the steeds which bore them being the giants of their race. In front of each cavalry regiment a numerous band of trumpeters blew their warlike and inspiring notes. Alas! that the many thousand sabres, ready to leap from their scabbards at that mighty emperor's bidding, should be destined to quench their brightness in human blood! that the hundred thousands of bayonets should each, ere long, pierce a brother's breast, and the millions of balls, which the army bore along with it, fly winged with death to as many beating hearts! And now approach the thundering cannon, some drawn by six, some by eight horses, and attended by artillerymen with lighted matches—but at this sight the philanthropic spectator can no longer repress his sighs, and the pomp and the glory of war delight his gaze no longer.

Of all these varied impressions our good Edward experienced nothing, while marching with his regiment in review before the emperor. He had eyes only for Napoleon, who stood in the centre of his numerous and glittering staff. Among all these star-decked heroes, his dress alone was simple and unpretending. He wore a small, three-cornered hat, without plume or other mark of distinction; a green coat, decorated with one solitary star, covered his somewhat portly person, and his dress was completed by

white breeches and boots. But in that pale and sallow countenance, a pair of piercing eyes shot down lightning glances from above the small and well formed nose, and revealed the hero and the conqueror.

Upon their entry into the Russian territory, Napoleon thus addressed his troops :

"Soldiers ! a wide field of glory lies before you ! From Egypt's burning plains to the confines of Russia, you have trodden one uninterrupted path of conquest. You know how to prolong it. We must smite these Russians, these barbarians, we must drive them out of Europe. In less than two months I will conduct you to the capital of the ancient Czars. There you shall repose from your labours, and pluck at your ease the pleasant fruits of victory. There will I myself dictate peace to Europe, and then lead you, covered with glory, back to your grateful country."

If only God's word were believed with the same implicit, undoubting faith, with which Napoleon's words were believed by his soldiers, this blighted world of ours might then indeed bear flowers instead of thorns !

So thoroughly persuaded were these thousands of thinking, reasoning beings of the truth of what had been addressed to them, that, as with the voice of one man, they saluted their monarch with the deafening shout, "Long live the Emperor !"

CHAPTER VIII.

The burning Mill.

Upon the evening of that day, on which the French host first trod upon Russian ground, the church bells of the village of Moiseoka, situated upon the high road to Smolensk, were heard to sound at a very unaccustomed hour. Immediately old and young repaired in haste to the house of God, which was lighted up by wax tapers. Impelled rather by curiosity than devotion, the villagers crowded up to the altar, on the steps of which stood the aged venerable priest, clad in his sacred vestments. As the people entered, he extended his right hand to enforce silence, which ere long reigned through the entire assembly.

With a loud voice, whose faltering tones, however, betrayed his inward emotion, he thus began:

"My children! The godless armies of France have this day set foot upon the hallowed soil of our beloved country, to defile our sanctuaries, and to carry fire, and sword, and death to our peaceful homes. The better to ensure the utter destruction of the foe, our armies will for a time retreat before them, and offer no obstacle to their advance. Therefore, early on the coming day, their hated columns may be upon us. Upon us then devolves the duty, as far as possible, to impede and harass their march. Demolish, therefore without delay, the bridges which cross our river, fill up the wells, burn your houses to the ground, drive away your cattle, and betake yourselves into the interior of the country, that the enemy may find the land he has dared to invade, a howling wilderness. But first let us beseech our blessed Lord, that He curse these infidels,—

discomfit—destroy them ! You are now assembled for the last time in this Church, which to save from pollution, I will with my own hands surrender to the flames !'

Deeply moved, the crowd swore to obey their priest's injunctions, and flinging themselves upon their knees, broke out into loud imprecations upon the advancing foe. After which each man hurried out to begin the work of devastation.

There lay the village, with its neat looking thatched huts, in the softened light of the setting sun. Groups of merry children were playing before the doors. Elder bushes just breaking into fragrant blossoms, budding lime and willow trees, thickly studded the long street of the village. The little river flowed with an impatient murmuring sound between the confined arches of the bridge, over which the village flocks, coming home for the night, passed with their many tinkling bells ; and busily and noisily went round the wheel of an adjoining mill, whose owner, full of anxiety and alarm, now hastened from the church.

The cattle were driven, loudly bellowing, out of their stalls ; while geese, ducks and poultry were hastily secured and packed up in baskets. The women loaded themselves with their household riches, consisting chiefly of stores of their own spun linen, while the men were busied in fastening immense bundles of straw round the wooden bulwarks of the bridge and then setting fire to them. Ere long every building in the village was in flames, with but one exception, the mill. Even the wooden church was early added to the general conflagration, after the priest had secured the sacred vessels. The children, driving the cattle before them, were the first to quit the burning village ; after them followed the women heavily laden ; the men, with the priest at their head, brought up the rear.

"What!" exclaimed the pastor, in a tone of surprise to the miller, who was standing evidently in a state of great perplexity, at the door of his yet uninjured mill,—"What, friend Nauman, do'nt you follow our example?"

"With your leave, venerable father!" returned the other, much embarrassed—"I really don't know what to do for the best. The mill with its machinery, will take ten times more rebuilding than your thatched huts, and in it consists all my worldly wealth. I am, as you are aware, a German, and am willing to hope, that as there are many Germans in the French army, I may escape unhurt."

At these words many loud and threatening exclamations arose from the crowd. "Away with the false foreigner!" they shouted. "Burn his mill over his head! He is not one of us, but a traitor!"

"Silence!" commanded the priest—"leave him to his own way. I assure you he will repent it bitterly. I grieve only on account of his wife, our sister, Kathinka, and her children. On thy head, stranger, come all the evil that may befall them through thy fault!"

Angrily murmuring, the Russians proceeded on their way. A few hours later, during the night, the French entered. The demolished bridge proved no hindrance to their crossing the shallow stream, but on account of the artillery, which was following in the rear, it was necessary to reconstruct it as speedily as possible, and the adjacent mill with its strong timbers, presented the necessary means for that purpose.

Without deigning to listen to the miller's moving intreaties, they proceeded at once to carry a part of the mill away; and the miller himself, as being well acquainted with the spot, was compelled to lend a helping hand to the

work. Nauman already repented, most heartily, that he had not followed his neighbours' example. And his grief and anxiety were increased, when he reflected upon the possibility of his wife and children being exposed to the ill treatment of insolent French soldiers, while he was chained to his task. Several times he attempted to steal away unperceived, but he was always driven back by the soldiers, who threatened to shoot him if he continued refractory. Ere long they began cursing and swearing that, notwithstanding the number of torches, they had not light enough for their work.

To supply this defect, the officer in command of the building party, gave orders to set the mill itself on fire. The command was immediately executed amid loud shouts of satisfaction, and in a few minutes the burning mill illuminated the whole landscape. All this time the horror of the wretched miller may be conceived, who was not permitted by the rude soldiers to quit his work for a moment, and who found blows as well as threats were in readiness to quicken his labours.

It was just at this time that the regiment to which Edward belonged arrived in the vicinity of the fire. The miller's wife had that moment rushed forth from the burning pile, her two younger children in her arms, and followed by her daughter, a girl about eleven years old. "Maria!" she cried, addressing her,—"Take care of the children! I will endeavour, if possible, to save something from destruction." And so saying she darted back among the flames.

The children cried piteously after her, "Mother! mother! do'nt leave us!"—and Maria was quite unable to pacify them, or to restrain them from forcing their way back into the mill. At the door their mother threw

herself before them. "Back! back! my children!" she cried to them; "Only let me save something from the wreck, that we may not starve." But she spoke in vain. The children clung to her garments and chained her to the spot.

"Let me go, mother!" exclaimed Maria, and instantly vanished in the burning pile. The mother stood looking after her, and wrung her hands in the extremity of terror and alarm, while she waited for the girl's return. Higher, and higher shoot the flames—wider and wider spreads the ruin—and Maria returns not. But her voice is heard from above, shrieking out in agony: "O Mother! I am burning!"

The wretched woman flung her children from her, and rushed into the house to save her daughter from destruction. But two Frenchmen threw themselves upon her.

"Restez ici!" they shouted—"lost! lost!" meaning that the girl, whose cries for succour were becoming fainter and fainter, was now beyond hopes of rescue.

The woman shrieked and struggled as if in her last agony; and sought but in vain to escape from the soldiers' iron grasp. Her two children at the same moment uttered their loud and piercing cries.

It was impossible for Edward to remain an unmoved spectator of the fearful scene. With the speed of lightning he darted from the ranks, and flew towards the mill. A French officer of rank placed himself in a threatening attitude in his path. Edward hurled his drum between his legs, causing the officer thereby to measure his length upon the ground, and then began rapidly to ascend the burning ladder, the poor child's half suffocated cry serving him as guide. He quickly reached the spot where she stood, and dragging her along with him, jumped, climbed, and crept from place to place, for whichever way he took,

the flames barred his exit. At length he found himself and his companion in an excavated spot or cellar under the mill, not far from the river and the water wheel. Here they took refuge; above them raged the flames; they could hear the cracking of the burning rafters, and the hissing of the fiery splinters as they fell into the water. At times even they fancied they could distinguish the heart-rending shrieks of the miller's wife, to which Maria always shouted in reply. The fire continued to rage for a considerable time with unabated fury, which was not altogether without danger to the two children. Closely huddled in a corner of the narrow vault, they were obliged to wait till nearly the dawn of the next day, before the fire was sufficiently subdued. With the exception of an occasional exclamation, the two prisoners had remained nearly silent the whole time. The girl had enough to think of in her parents; and anxiety respecting his desertion of the regiment, and the responsibility he had incurred weighed very heavily upon Edward's mind. One thing however had not escaped his observation, that his companion must be a countrywoman of his own, inasmuch as she spoke perfectly good German.

As soon as it could be accomplished without danger, Edward clambered with Maria over the still smoking ruins till they emerged to the light of day.

Eagerly he cast his eyes round in search of his companions; but nothing but a deserted, solitary waste, strewn over with portions of wreck, met his despairing glance. Desolation every where! The fresh morning breeze passed over the ruined village, throwing up in one place a shower of sparks, in another, raising columns of thick white smoke. Maria screamed out with all her might in German—in Russian—she called the names of her mother, b

brother and sister, her father—then the neighbours—no answer, save the crackling of the cooling timbers in their once pleasant home.

Sobbing and moaning the poor child wandered among the ruins at Edward's side, whose anxiety became greater every moment. Not that he in the slighest degree regretted the attempted rescue, which had been so wonderfully crowned with success; but he longed most ardently to rejoin his companions. He had in vain sought for his drum, and this tended to increase his alarm. He quickly, however, made up his mind as to what course he should take. Endeavouring with a few kind words to pacify the child, he promised to bring her to her parents, and taking her by the hand, struck into the road which the army had taken.

They soon came up with a party of the French, who treating him as a deserter, without more ado, placed him under arrest, and in two hours more delivered him up to his own regiment, which along with the rest of the division had encamped in a small town, just abandoned by its inhabitants.

"Comrade,"—said the soldiers, who very shortly after conducted him to the presence of his judges—"you've got into a pretty mess; and you may thank your stars if you come out of it with a whole skin."

Edward implored them to look after the poor forsaken little girl, and to give her in charge to serjeant Hoyer, which they, at any rate to satisfy him, promised most faithfully to do.

CHAPTER IX.

Edward is shot.

The apartment into which Edward was conducted, was crowded with officers from every regiment; among the rest Edward's colonel and the French officer to whom he had so unceremoniously made a present of his drum. All seemed to be in the best possible humour. Jests flew about and the laugh resounded on all sides, while the business of breakfast, represented by white bread, Dutch cheese, and wine, was very vigorously being carried on.

Edward's entrance caused not the slightest interruption. He had to wait for some time, secured between his two guards, while the orderly made his report to the Colonel; he was then brought up for examination. This did not last ten minutes.

Edward could not deny that he had left his ranks, that he had flung his drum at the legs of a French staff-officer, and that he had been apprehended as a deserter.

The presiding officer pointed out to him that any one of these three offences was sufficient to warrant the punishment of death; as each involved the breaking of his regimental oath, and was an act of insubordination; and in addition all this, he was the first who had transgressed since they had entered upon the enemy's territory.

Without for a moment interrupting the pleasant operation of eating and drinking, the officers proceeded to pass sentence upon the prisoner, which was that he should be shot. Without paying the slighest regard to his extreme youth, they conducted the matter with as much indiffe

ence as if it had referred to nothing more serious than the decapitation of a stray fowl.

This contemptuous treatment pained Edward to the heart, particularly when he compared the bitter sorrow of his parents with the unfeeling indifference of his judges. In his own Colonel too he no longer recognised his once kind and considerate friend. With a stern countenance, and not once deigning a look at the condemned, he stood among the rest. It was in vain that Edward lifted his eyes imploringly to his face; he took no notice.

Edward had nothing further to offer in his defence, than that he had acted with no bad intention, but had only quitted the ranks of his comrades to save a poor girl's life that was in peril.

This brought down upon his head a pretty lecture. The same lieutenant who had once been so unnecessarily severe with old Hoyer, took up the word and said angrily, "Silly fool! Do you think we are come into Russia to save the lives of Russians? No, but to conquer, to annihilate them. For the rest, a soldier's duty is to obey his superiors implicitly. He has no business to trouble himself about any thing else. Supposing that even your own father or brother were in the enemy's ranks, you must attack, shoot him, cut him down, just as if he were nothing at all to you."

Poor Edward shuddered, as he thought upon the possibility of the case. "No," he thought to himself, "I would much rather be shot myself, than take the life of my dear father or brother."

The signal was given for him to withdraw, but he found it quite impossible to do so without first taking leave of his once kind colonel. Going quickly up to him, he kissed his hand, and covering it with tears, thanking him in broken accents for all the kindness he had shewn towards *him.*

The Colonel contracted his brow into still sterner lines, ground his teeth together, and said sharply; "I cannot help you even if I would. Your crime is too great. If you had only offended me, I might perhaps have forgiven you. But your having presumed to insult a French officer, costs you your neck."

Having thus spoken, he was for turning away, but Edward said hastily, "I do not ask, Colonel, for my life. I owe it to you that I did not lose it two months ago. But my poor parents!—Will you inform them that I thought of them with love to the last? that I thank them a thousand and a thousand times for all they have done for me from my birth unto the hour I left them; that I"—here his voice faltered, and in a lower tone he continued—"have—not—died—quite—unworthily!"

The Colonel replied only by a short nod, turned away, and gulped down a glass of wine. "Captain Warner," he then said, "you will see the sentence executed."

A significant look from the French Colonel induced another French officer to say, "I shall be glad to accompany you, Captain."

The latter bowed affirmatively, and then withdrew with Edward and his guards.

Outside the house serjeant Hoyer was waiting for them with four-and-twenty men, four of whom were provided with spades. A drummer, beating from time to time a muffled roll, headed the procession, which was to conduct Edward to death.

They soon reached an open space of ground. Just behind the last house in that direction of the town, a hole was dug, which was to serve for Edward's grave, and the sand was thrown up in a heap beside it. While this was going on, the soldiers stood with their loaded muskets in

gloomy silence round the criminal. He too was speechless. No one addressed to him a word of comfort; no sympathizing hand wiped away the cold heavy drops that stood upon his pale forehead; no minister of religion dismissed him upon this last unknown journey, with his parting blessing.

Hoyer, it was evident, was struggling violently with his feelings. Glancing at the youthful prisoner, who stood alternately gazing upon the earth, and then lifting his moist eyes to heaven, he stroked his moustachios from time to time with a most embarrassed air. "As sure as my name's Christopher," he muttered, "I shall have to give the lad a hint. The fright might be as fatal as our bullets. Let ten men," he then said, speaking aloud, "advance and fire. If the prisoner does not fall, then let the other ten come on and do it better. Take good aim at the centre of the body, and then you'll hardly miss.—Now, come, my good lad!" he said to Edward, "I must see you to your last resting place."

These words roused Edward from his stupor. Summoning up all his courage, he said, "Farewell, comrades! Take good aim, and strike home, that I may not be tortured longer than necessary." "Yes," replied the men monotonously. Upon this Hoyer advanced with the prisoner towards the sand-heap, and on the way said to him in a kind tone, "Is there anything, my poor fellow, you have to say?" Edward's breast heaved, and he drew a deep sigh. "No!" he replied at first very slowly; then recollecting himself, he added, in a quicker tone, "Stay, yes! That Russian girl whom I have bought so dearly; promise me, father Hoyer, that you will take care that she is restored to her parents."

"Shall be done as sure as my name is Christopher!" plied the other.

They had now reached the sand-heap. "Kneel down my lad!" said Hoyer, "I must blindfold you." He pulled out a blue printed cotton pocket handkerchief, and placed it over Edward's eyes, who trembled slightly.

Perceiving this, the serjeant again muttered to himself, "I must indeed, colonel, though you were to make mince meat of me for it!" He then added aloud, "I do'nt think there will be many accounts to settle between you and"—here he pointed upwards—"but perhaps you may like to say a short prayer, and so make a good end of a bad business."

Willingly Edward folded his hands. In a loud and earnest voice, though with quivering lips, he repeated the Lord's Prayer.

"Odd enough!" again muttered serjeant Hoyer to himself, "that every poor sinner just before he is going to die, says the Lord's prayer, when for the first time in his life, he will never want his daily bread again. Well, I suppose, its likely enough to be the only prayer that at such a time he can bethink himself of. Well, well, God Almighty knows best what we want for all that."

When Edward had concluded, the serjeant whispered a few words privately in his ear, at which the boy trembled more violently than before. This seemed to vex Hoyer.

"Comrade!" he cried out, "be a man! Hold up, so that you do'nt drop before the balls reach you, and so prolong your misery!"

He then walked back to his men, who in the meantime, by command of the Captain, had loaded their muskets. Ten of them advanced to within twelve paces of the condemned; the Captain then gave the word: "Shoulder arms! *Present!* Fire!"—Pu—ff! and ten shots whistled *through the air.*

Edward sank lifeless from the sand-heap into the open grave behind him.

Hoyer sprang hastily to the spot, removed the handkerchief from his eyes, and carefully examining the body, cried out, "A good hit! six balls at least in the breast!"

With the assistance of one of the spade bearers, he laid the corpse just as it was, straight in the hole, and immediately shovels were set vigorously to work to replace the sand-hill whence it had been taken.

Upon this Captain Warner took the French officer, who had been an attentive observer of the proceedings, by the arm, and walked hastily away with him towards the town, doubtless with the intention of resuming the unfinished breakfast.

As soon as the officers' backs were turned, the extempore grave-diggers paused in their work, which after all had been more apparent than real, for Edward's body still lay uncovered with sand.

Leaning upon their implements, they waited until the two officers had entirely disappeared; the rest of the soldiers then approached the grave and formed a dense circle round it. All with one consent then opened their mouths and spat out the balls which they had bitten out of their cartridges, consigning them to honourable oblivion in their comrade's grave, boasting, amid loud laughter, of the pretty trick they had played the Frenchman.

"That's what I call shooting in French fashion!" said one. "The rascals taught us it themselves. How many of their own fellows hav'nt they shot that were'nt a button the worse afterwards. What's sauce for a goose, is sauce for a gander."

"The French colonel"—said another—"might almost have thought as much, and so sent one of his own men

anapes along with us. Well, I'll back our Captain for making him believe black's white any day."

The soldiers were full of triumph at their successful hoax; and infected by their merriment, and in the best possible humour at his own share in the transaction, Hoyer now seized hold of the hand of the seeming dead drummer, and said, "Youngster, get up, you're wanted to dance at your own funeral!"

But Edward did not get up. There he lay stiff, cold, and senseless.

"Silly stuff," grumbled Hoyer, pulling out a spirit flask, "who would take a trifle to heart in that manner! When you have smelt powder a few times, my lad, you will think such a matter as this a nice joke."

So saying, he anointed Edward's face and temples with the spirit. Gradually signs of life returned; for he was indeed alive. No ball had struck him. His comrades had merely fired at him with blank cartridges; it was this that Hoyer had whispered in his ear, but he had found it impossible to believe it.

Crying and sobbing with joy, he shook his companions all round by the hand. "Does the colonel know?" he asked, "for he seemed quite turned against me." "Oh, that was only make-believe," returned Hoyer, "to blind those spying Frenchmen. You understand me, eh! without his leave we should never have dared to practice the hoax. 'Hoyer,' he said to me, 'see that you do your business well. I shall never forgive myself if this young fellow is made to kick the bucket for what was in reality a noble act!'"

"My good Colonel!" said Edward, a gleam of deep pleasure lighting up his tearful eyes, "from this day forth I will run through fire and water for him. And for you too as well, father Hoyer—for all of you!"

"Aye just hear him!" laughed Hoyer, "since yesterday nothing will serve him but running through fire and water. But—h'm!—h'm! at present I am sorry to say it wo'nt be in our power to make any use of your very grandiloquent offer; you must part company with us."

"Leave you!" said Edward, in great alarm.

"Why yes, and that directly too," replied Hoyer. "You must see the necessity of that at once; else our secret comes to light and our Colonel into a scrape. We must look sharp as it is, or those keen fellows will smell a rat. See here is an old smock-frock, which you must put on over your uniform, and look yonder, behind that garden wall, your little companion from the mill is waiting for you. You can go with her to the Russians. If it does'nt suit you being among them, and you find no other opportunity of making your way back home, why then at the worst you can seek us out, after there's been time for the affair to blow over a bit."

With streaming eyes, Edward took leave of his companions, and charging Hoyer with the conveyance of a thousand thanks to the Colonel, hurried off to overtake his little Russian companion.

He found her, as had been told him, behind the garden wall, and at once proceeded with her to take the way back to the desolated village, there to seek out Maria's parents.

CHAPTER X.

Edward's threefold Combat—with himself, with a Wolf, and with a Dog.

Although his uniform was completely concealed by the smock frock which he wore over it, Edward was still so fearful if he followed the high road, of being pursued and taken, that he and his companion preferred rather pursuing their way by bye-paths, carefully avoiding the high-road, lest they should encounter troops marching along it, though never leaving it altogether out of sight.

In consequence of this devious course, and the frequent real or fancied necessity for concealing themselves, and waiting till the danger was past, the time which was ordinarily required to walk from their starting point to Maria's former residence was more than doubled.

But Edward felt no fatigue. Rejoiced at his narrow escape from death, it is impossible to guess how far he would have run to make sure of his newly won life, but consideration for his little companion restrained him, who he knew must be quite unable to walk so far as himself. For this reason he several times called a halt, each time inquiring very tenderly how Maria felt herself. But Maria steadily denied feeling tired ; Edward however saw very clearly, that anxiety respecting her parents alone lent her a feverish and unnatural strength.

All this time the sun shone with a fierceness which Edward had scarcely thought could be possible in Russia.

As often as they came to a spring, a pool, or even a ditch, they eagerly quenched their thirst. Neither of the

thought once about eating. At length the blackened ruins of the village were visible in the distance.

The sun was set, but the sky was still resplendent with his departing radiance, and a golden light rested upon the sorrowing earth, mourning under the ravages of war. With quickened steps, Maria hastened towards the spot of her birth. Edward followed, urging the necessity of caution. This however proved superfluous, for not a human being was visible, far or near.

Weeping bitterly, Maria sat down upon the threshold of her father's house, almost the only portion of the premises that was not utterly destroyed.

Silently seating himself beside her, Edward in like manner abandoned himself to his reflections. These were wholly occupied with his distant home and his beloved parents. He was now free, and yonder road would lead him to them. There was no one now to hinder him setting out in quest of his birth place,—his bosom swelled with delight at the thought. Neither the many hundreds of weary miles he would have to travel, nor the dangers of the way, nor his own destitute condition, damped his ardour. And though he might have to beg his bread from door to door, he would still enter upon his journey with joyful alacrity.

"Oh, father and mother! Bertha and Robert!" he joyfully exclaimed, stretching out his arms in the air, "how glad you will be to see me once again." At that moment a low stifled sob reminded him that he was not free,—not his own master, as he had fancied.

A heavy grief fell upon his heart. He cast a sorrowful glance upon his companion, who like him, called upon the dear names of father and mother, but accompanied by bitter tears for their loss. His mind was tormented by a

struggle between conflicting emotions. Could he, dare he, venture to take the little girl with him upon the long journey he was desirous to enter upon, and separate her perhaps for ever from her parents and her home? Or ought he to leave her behind him helpless and forsaken, exposed to almost certain destruction? He gazed upon the weeping girl, and as he gazed, his heart filled with tenderness and pity. Had he not purchased her life at the risk of his own? And could he abandon a possession so dearly bought, when perhaps through his continued assistance alone it could be preserved? Long did he struggle with the temptation, but each moment with increased success. At length he conquered.

"Don't cry, Maria," he began in a firm and cheerful tone, "We will now go and seek your father and mother. It was that road, you say, the people went, when they left the village. Well, let us take the same direction."

Edward's mind had been strengthened and refreshed, the body therefore now claimed similar indulgence. Hunger made known its cravings very importunately to him, but how to satisfy it?

"I say, what have you in your bundle?" exclaimed Edward quickly, casting his eyes upon his companion's arm, on which hung a small bundle.

"The man with the great moustachios gave it to me," said Maria, drying her tears upon her apron.

"Hoyer?" interrogated Edward, and then proceeded to examine the contents of the wallet. As he had almost with certainty expected, he found meat, bread, and a bottle of brandy.

The children immediately fell to and enjoyed themselves right heartily. Youthful grief is violent, but not lasting. The meal concluded, they cheerfully turned their head

upon the ruined village, and wandered forth upon the track of its inhabitants. Twilight had nearly faded, the stars twinkled faintly in the sky, yet it was not dark, and the atmosphere continued warm. Not a sound was to be heard, not even a grasshopper uttered its note among the brown sunburnt grass: and a deep solemn stillness reigned over the wide plain. But heedless of all this, the children walked briskly forwards.

"Look there!" suddenly began Edward, in a joyful tone, pointing with his hand to an object that lay in their path, "A good sign!—Where there are dogs, one may be sure their masters are not far off; and here is one to a certainty,—a shepherd dog most likely!"

Maria looked, drew her companion back, and then said half aloud, but without any tokens of alarm, "That is a wolf, and not a dog."

"A wolf!" said Edward with horror, and passed his hand hastily to his left side, where he was accustomed to carry his sword, of which, however, he had been deprived at the time he was taken prisoner, "A wolf! God help us! We are lost! Let us run away directly, perhaps he has not seen us!"

Edward infected Maria with his timidity. In a voice evidencing less confidence, she answered, "My father says, it is only when we begin to run away, that a wolf pursues us."

"But what are we to do?" returned Edward, "Are we to let ourselves be quietly eaten?" "Oh, no!" said Maria with perfect coolnees, "it is not as bad as that. Only in winter and when very badly put to it indeed, my father says, will a wolf attack a man; he must be dreadfully hungry; and then he would be sure to howl and not sit so quietly as that one does."

Edward stood undetermined what to do. He stared at the wolf, and the wolf stared at him. At length the boy's patience began to tire. "Are we to stop all night here?" he asked Maria, half angrily. "Let us go a little round-about so as not to pass him!" "If only he does'nt follow us," said Maria dubiously.

Edward's temper began to give way, "Well this is a pretty thing," he exclaimed very indignantly; "Am I not a soldier? did'nt I yesterday run through fire, and to-day hav'nt I been shot? And am I to stand here frightened to death by a rascally wolf? Only wait a bit, and I'll teach thee to open that ugly mouth at me!"

He sought about for a large pebble. "Maria! If the wolf should attack me, set off as fast as you can, and while I am struggling with him, you will have time to get to a place of safety. I wish I only had my sword now!"

So saying, he aimed the stone at the wolf; it fell with a dull sound upon the animal's fur. His hair standing on end, Edward waited to see the effect of this daring feat; and a weight, much heavier than the stone, fell from his heart, when he saw the dreaded beast rise slowly from the spot, and walk away with his tail between his legs. "I have paid him off!" boasted Edward, his courage returning in full tide. "Only let me see him again, and I'll break his head for him."

Occasionally looking round after the discomfited wolf, Edward and Maria proceeded on their way.

"Oh! oh!" he exclaimly triumphantly, as he spied a stout cudgel, and took possession of it. "Now we have got means of defence. I remember there was written in my A B C book,

"In Poland a wolf, that had ne'er been at school,
Once swallowed a joiner along with his rule!"

What silly stuff! I would beat him such a row de dow upon his back, that he should quite forget to stand up again."

When Edward's warlike valour had somewhat evaporated, and left room for a little sober reflection, he said to his companion: "Do you see nothing, Maria, of a village, or a house? Can you make out no light anywhere?"

"No!" replied Maria, yawning.

"I could almost think," continued Edward, "that that black thing before us was a wood."

"Yes, a wood!" nodded Maria.

"Our way seems to go right through it. Now supposing there should be a whole pack of wolves skulking there; I could manage with one, but———

"Bow, wow, wow!" interrupted a great dog, running at him.

"Back!" cried Edward, flourishing his cudgel. "Back, I say, keep a respectful distance, or I shall strike you."

Apparently the dog did not understand German; without paying the slighest regard to Edward's threatening words and attitude, he set furiously upon him. Smack fell the cudgel. But the dog was clever enough to evade the blow, and with his teeth he seized firm hold of the lower end of the stick; and Edward notwithstanding his efforts, found it impossible to withdraw it. The dog on his part, continued advancing his teeth higher and higher up the offending instrument, until Edward was at length obliged to relinquish his own hold, if he would save his hand from similar treatment. Immediately the dog seized him by the throat, and dragged him to the ground.

Our prostrate hero believed nothing less than that his end was come. The dog, however, stood now very quietly beside him, and only when Edward attempted to move, did he display his teeth.

"Only keep quite still," urged Maria, "and he won't hurt you."

Edward saw no other course but to comply. Just then they heard footsteps approaching towards them, and various exclamations in Russian.

Maria at once answered readily and fluently. In another minute, two men armed with guns, stood beside Edward, whom Maria, by command of the Russians, directed to get up, a permission which our young Goliath, deeply ashamed, availed himself of. Silent and crest-fallen he followed the two men, who still conversing with Maria, directed their steps towards the wood.

Here, squatting round a large fire, which was burning in a hollow, they came upon a number of wild-looking Russians. All started to their feet, as soon as the children approached.

Edward saw their savage, suspicious countenances turned at onee upon him, while he stood in the midst like a criminal. Maria now became his guardian angel, as she was able to inform the Russians all that had befallen them in the last two days. How earnestly did Edward now long to be able to understand their language; and fortunate it was for him that he had an interpreter in Maria. From her he learnt, that neither her parents, nor any of her friends were among this party, and that their object in assembling here was to way-lay any straggling French soldiers, and slay them on the spot. She assured him, however, that he had nothing to fear, and might feel perfectly safe, if he would only give his word not to return again to the enemy, which promise she had already made in his name.

Bye and bye the children grew very sleepy; the men prepared them a rude couch of dry leaves, where covered with a few clothes, they slept soundly till morning.

CHAPTER XI.

The Surprise.

"As—dwa—tritschoti!" cried Edward in bad Russian, throwing out his chest. Then added in German: "Heads up! Toes out!"

Maria, who marched beside him, acted as adjutant, and was directed to translate these words into Russian.

"Halt!" cried Edward.

"Stoi!" cried Maria.

A troop of tall, stout Russian peasants drew up like a wall, at the word of their leader. Each of them carried, suspended by a broad leathern strap round his neck, a rudely-formed drum, covered with half-tanned parchment. Their clumsy hands held awkwardly enough, a pair of equally clumsy drum sticks.

"Not so!" said Edward angrily. "Take hold of the upper end of the sticks with only three fingers. Pay attention! in this way."

Maria interpreted promptly.

"Good!" shouted Edward again. "Now beat a gentle roll—row, dow, row de dow, dow."

"I can't translate that!" said Maria. "Doesn't signify!" replied Edward with importance. "The fellows must learn it after me. So again:—row, dow, row de dow, dow."

The drummer novices at this raised a fearful din.

"I only wish friend Hoyer could see me!" said Edward laughing. "How he would stare to find me re-installed as regimental drummer. But I must take care that I get some credit with my scholars. I mean to train them after the most approved method."

And in this style our little drummer chattered for some time with his adjutant.

The reader, however, who so unexpectedly beholds our hero in this new character, requires to be briefly informed how the two wanderers, after taking leave in the morning of the party in the wood, proceeded on their pilgrimage from place to place in search of Maria's parents,—but in vain. They were fortunate, however, in every where finding sufficient for their support: though Edward soon became heartily weary of their continual and apparently fruitless wandering. Added to this, provisions, in consequence of the ravages of the enemy, were daily becoming more scarce, and the little mendicants often met with sour looks and hard woods when they begged for food.

In the meantime, from all sides poured in swarms of willing troops, obedient to the summons of their emperor, and ready under his banners to offer a deadly resistance to the hated invaders.

The two wandering children happened to fall in with a muster of these troops, which had taken up their quarters in a town of some size. Edward's birth and late employment could not here remain long concealed, and the Russian authorities, before whom he was conducted, left him no other choice, than either to be treated as a prisoner of war, or to consider Russia henceforward as his country, and as such to enrol himself among her defenders.

Edward made up his mind to the latter alternative, all the more readily, inasmuch as nothing further was required of him than to exercise a few recruits in the art of drumming. He had his quarters assigned him, not far from Maria, received regular pay and rations, and had besides the opportunity, as we have just seen, of acting in a small way, the part of a "man dressed in a little brief authority

To some extent, Maria had become consoled for the loss of her parents. Edward she loved and treated as her brother, while he, making the most of the difference in their years, rather considered the relation in which he stood to her as of the paternal kind.

In this manner many weeks passed away. Gradually, however, an oppressive home-sickness took possession of poor Edward. For nights together his intense longings for his home and family drove sleep wholly from his eyes. Neither could he become accustomed to the Russian mode of living, and their barbarous discipline. Not a day passed in which he did not see the most savage punishments inflicted, and even officers were at times reminded of their duty, by a blow on the ear from their Colonel. Concern for his own back also, made him not a little uneasy, though so far he had come off very favourably.

One night he had, as usual, been so busied with thoughts of his distant home, that it was late before he fell asleep. He dreamt that he was again in his native town, and that peace was just then being proclaimed. Amid loud rejoicing the people crowded forth into the streets; cannons were fired and all the bells rung forth a merry peal. Louder and more deafening became the noise. The reports of the cannon seemed to approach nearer; the windows were shaken by their thunder; a bright glare suddenly spread itself round the dreamer!—at that moment a child's shrill scream pierced his ear;—he awoke.

Maria stood before him, crying and pulling at him with all her might. The room was lighted up as if by the midday sun:—a pin might have been picked up from the floor. Below, bellowed loud and furious voices, mingled with groans and cries of pain. Musket balls in quick succession came pattering through the broken window, and

struck sharply against the opposite wall. Outside, the street seemed all on fire.

"Oh, Edward! Edward!" exclaimed the poor child, almost beside herself with terror—"Oh, I am so frightened! the firing has begun!"

Edward was scarcely yet well awake. He rubbed his eyes, and looked first at Maria and then at the burning houses opposite.

"Stoop down, then, do!" cried the little girl, trying by force to hold him back as he was advancing toward the window.

"Those are our people!" said Edward, joyfully, looking out into the street. "That's my regiment! Comrades! Moyer! Here I am too!"

He ran down stairs. Maria after him. Just as the children reached the house door, to step into the street, a soldier belonging to Edward's company ran against them.

"Comrade!" joyfully shouted the latter. But the comrade was too furious to see or hear any thing. His looks seemed so full of rage, that Maria was terrified to death, and hastily pulling Edward back, they both fell upon the floor together. Well for them that they did; for the soldier had already levelled his bayonet at them. Thinking probably that he had really done for them, he rushed forwards. Quite stunned, Edward raised himself and Maria from the ground. Looking down the street, he saw at a little distance his protector, the Colonel, upon horseback, in the middle of a group of his own men.

"Oh Colonel! Oh, your honour!" he cried out, half gladly, half imploringly. The Colonel could not fail to understand him: what however was his response?

"*Move on!* my lads, move on! Forwards, forwards *Cut every thing* down that comes in your way! No qu*ter! Forwards!* Forwards!

How wonderfully must the once humane Colonel have changed. Edward was quite astonished at the change.

Under such critical circumstances, he thought it more prudent to withdraw if possible from the scene of combat.

Sorrowfully he crept back to his quarters, which he now found quite deserted; and musing sadly upon his position, cowered down behind the house-door for shelter. "Am I then so altered that they dont know me?" he sighed, "or do they really think that I am gone over to the enemy? What has become of Hoyer, I wonder?"

Scarcely had the thought passed through his mind, when Hoyer burst into the house, followed by several soldiers.

"Hoyer! Hoyer!" he piteously exclaimed, stretching out his arms towards him. But Hoyer only replied by pointing his musket at the supposed Russian, and would most certainly have fired, if Edward had not called out, "I am Edward Winch, your drummer!"

The Sergeant immediately dropped his piece, and said with surprised astonishment, "What? Grenades and Howitzers! You here! I had very nearly made a mistake!"

"Ah!" sighed Edward, "You must all have strangely altered in the little time I have been away from you. Private Stenson, of our company, that I came across first, was going to run me through with his bayonet, the Colonel ordered them to cut me down, and even you, father Hoyer—

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the serjeant—"one sees that you are a green horn yet in the noble art of war. We are all just as we were, and what you find so strange in us, is that we have got our blood warmed a bit with fighting, and have neither eyes nor ears for any thing else. Once fairly in a scuffle, and every thing must give way that does'nt carry our colours. If it were one's own father or

brother—all alike. One strikes, shoots, thrusts, right and left—no matter what—the more the better!"

"But," inquired Edward, "what has put you into such a fury? Last night no one knew that you were in the neighbourhood, and as far as I know every body went quietly to bed."

"Capital!" said Heyer, laughing. "We surprised them when they were all snoring in their beds; and to give them a good warming, kindly burnt their houses over their heads for them."

"Poor creatures!" said Edward in a pitying tone, "They haven't used me at all badly, and they never did you any harm!"

"That's true enough," returned Hoyer, "but what do we fight for, if such things mayn't happen?"

"And what *do* we fight for?" asked Edward. "Here we have been marching several hundred miles, to murder people that we never saw in our lives before, and—"

"Hold your tongue, you young rascal!" said Hoyer, angrily interrupting him. "What business have you to reason? A soldier must obey, not ask questions. The Emperor Napoleon has said: 'It is war; the Russians are your enemies;' and all the soldier has to do, is to fall upon them without mercy. If the Emperor Napoleon should say to-morrow: 'Hold! it is peace; put up your swords, the Russians are our friends,'—Hurrah! is then the word! shake hands, brother Russian! Let me drink out of your bottle, my Muscovy duck!"

"I always thought," remarked Edward, "that love and hatred would not be commanded in that way."

"With the emperor Napoleon everything is possible," replied Hoyer. "I should like to see his equal. A few words from him are worth more than a hundred com

from any body else. Who knows"—he added with a chuckle,—"who knows, but some day I may get my inch of red ribbon, with a little white cross at the end of it,"—and he pointed to his breast which he threw out proudly as he spoke.

"An inch of red ribbon?" inquired Edward further.

"You are a stupid jackanapes," grumbled Hoyer, "and over your silly talk I am forgetting my own affairs. As sure as a gun my fellows will have helped themselves to every thing in the house worth taking, while I stand here talking nonsense with you. I won't lose my share of the plunder though"—and he was hurrying upstairs.

"Father Hoyer!" cried Edward after him. "What's the matter now?" asked the sergeant. Somewhat embarrassed Edward began: "I have always taken you for an honest man"—

"Bombs and cannon balls! who says that I'm not?"

"But you were going to steal other people's property!"

"I tell you what, my lad! take care how you abuse my good nature, and keep a civil tongue in your head for once. Plundering is not stealing, and in war-time is lawful all the world over."—He darted off.

"I see how it is," muttered Edward, "war is made a cloak for every kind of wickedness."

Ere long the soldiers returned laden with spoil. What they did not want, or could not bring away with them, was injured and destroyed. Provisions, articles of clothing, linen, candles, soap, broken furniture, lay strewed about and trampled into rubbish. By far the greater portion of the property, which had been found, was wantonly destroyed.

Sighing deeply, Edward gazed at the scene of wreck; and then shaking his head followed his companions, who had left the burning town, and were proceeding to join the main body of the army.

CHAPTER XII.

The Battle.

Edward was again installed in his post of drummer to the regiment; the colonel and all his companions having welcomed him heartily on his return.

Maria was placed under the care of a sutler, and could either walk or ride as she liked. But whenever a halt was called, for rest or refreshment, she never failed to seek out her young preserver, who had now happily nothing more to fear from a French colonel. To his great surprise Edward ere long perceived that the regiment was diminished to little more than one half its former numbers.

"Yes," said Hoyer, whom he lost no time in questioning upon this point, "You were very lucky that you were shot in jest, else it's very likely before this you would have been shot in earnest. We had to storm a rascally old fortress, Smolensk they call it, and many of our brave fellows never saw the next morning. Six drummers were among the fallen, and likely enough, the bloody lot might have fallen upon you."

A few days after this, a rumour was spread that the whole force of the opposing army had taken up a position right in the way of the French, and that a general engagement might therefore be expected. Strange enough! this news caused universal satisfaction. The fact was, the men were sick to death of their continued wearisome marches, and welcomed any change, though it might bring death to thousands.

The various detached masses of the French army now received orders to effect a junction with the main body, and each division had its place assigned.

The whole army might be said to represent some immense bird; its body formed of solid, heavy masses of infantry, speckled over with innumerable pieces of artillery; while its stupendous wings were stretched out to a distance on each side to ensure their out-flanking, and partially enclosing the corresponding wings of the enemy. Stationed some distance behind the main army was another, intended as a reserve in case of need, for the support and relief of the first. The boundless plain seemed scarcely able to afford space for these mighty numbers, devoted to the ruthless purposes of war.

It was on the 5th of September, 1812, when towards evening the opening roar of artillery announced the commencement of the fight. Air and earth shook at the fearful concussion.

Edward had never before heard the report of cannon so near to him. He turned first red and then white with terror. His regiment in the meantime was encamped upon the ground as careless and indifferent as if the firing did not concern them in the least. They eat, they drank, they jested, laughed, and when tired, stretched themselves to rest upon the plain. This perfect indifference only served to increase his alarm. He fled to Hoyer. Perceiving the tremor which shook his frame, the sergeant said soothingly:

"This firing does not concern us. It is directed only to an entrenchment on the left wing. But the principal lines of the enemy yonder, will cost more blood before they are won. They must be gained, at whatever price, as well as the village of Borodino."

"And then?" asked Edward.

"*Then,*" *continued* Hoyer, "there will be no further *obstacle to our marching* upon Moscow."

"*And then?*" *inquired* Edward again.

"Then there will be peace, and we shall march home again."

"But at home we had peace already. What need was there for us to come all this way, and sacrifice so many lives, when peace could have been had so much more easily?"

"You don't understand these matters. We must have war sometimes, and not without reason was the great comet seen last year."

"In my opinion, it was Napoleon who began the war, and not the comet."

"Well, maybe he did! But still the comet foretold it, and showed that it was the will of God it should be so."

"The comet can't speak, how then could it foretell the war?"

"You numskull! In such things consists prophecy."

"But who is it that prophecies? Not Almighty God, not the comet; it must then only be men, who want to believe what they like."

"You are a goose!" growled Hoyer, and turned away.

Edward, however, said to himself; "I don't give up my opinion for all that. I cannot endure that the innocent comet should bear the blame of evils which people clearly cause themselves. No! They only act in this manner as a cloak to their own wickedness."

After a time the thunder of the cannon ceased. As far as the eye could reach numerous watch-fires blazed, round which the soldiers encamped. None however could sleep, from anticipation of the coming events.

"Shall I be alive at this time to-morrow, I wonder?" thought Edward as he gave way to melancholy reflections.

Slowly the night passed away, and more than one sol*dier, worn out* by fatigue, closed at length his weary eyelids

perhaps for the last time, in short and fitful slumber. The watch-fires died out; deeper and deeper became the stillness; nothing but the challenge of the sentinels, or the occasional neighing of a steed, broke the universal repose,—short and specious—for as soon as a faint, grey streak of dawn, announced the approach of day, each soldier rose quickly and unsummoned from his hard bed.

The piled-up muskets were rapidly distributed, and the whole army stood to their arms. The officers carefully examined the condition of their weapons, as well as that of their men. The colonel rode along the ranks inciting the troops to courage and constancy. The sergeant read out the roll of his company, which then filed off to its appointed ground.

Bright and glorious rose that morning's sun: but not blessing and fertility—but blood and desolation—was he this time to spread over those wide fields. No jubilant lark, on this morning, sang aloft in the blue air its hymn of gratitude to its mighty Maker. Scared and frightened, the little songsters had fled in haste before those swarms of strange warriors, and the thunder of the artillery. Dull and distant the latter came booming from time to time through the morning mist; while the army, strung up to the highest pitch of expectation, stood waiting for the signal of attack.

An order arrived to fortify the ground, by throwing up earth-works. At once the wide extended plain became a scene of busy labour, and before night-fall, a long line of deep trenches and perpendicular mounds of earth stretched as far as the eye could reach.

Another night passed without general hostilities; but *all the more fearfully* began the bloody work on the third morning. *Twelve* hundred heavy pieces of artillery, com-

ting fire and death, shook the ground as if with an earthquake. The heavens above seemed on fire. Some of the messengers of death flew whistling over Edward's regiment, which stood as yet motionless, resting on their arms.

The state of our young drummer, bodily and mental, was such as he had never before experienced. Every muscle seemed relapsed, so that his limbs involuntarily knocked one against the other. Though he had only just breakfasted, he felt so sick, and his stomach so empty, that his mouth continually filled with water. Cold drops of sweat stood upon his face, and before his eyes floated dark shadows, with long extended wings.

The young lieutenant with whom the reader has already been made acquainted in the course of this story, seemed to be in a state somewhat similar. With a trembling hand he lifted the spirit-flask to his white lips, a movement which did not pass unnoticed by the mocking soldiers who stood near him.

"Our smooth-faced lieutenant has got the cannon fever!" they whispered one to another.

Yes, truly a fever, and a very violent one, which also made our poor Edward quake. The advanced lines of the army now began to move forwards, the position which they left being immediately taken up by the troops behind. Another moment, and Edward's turn would come!

The officers buckled their sword-belts tighter round their waists; the men strung their knapsacks a few inches higher upon their shoulders; all stood awaiting with impatience the word of command;—it came.

At the utmost pitch of his powerful voice the colonel shouted: "Present! Lower arms! Fix bayonets! Advance!"

The band of the regiment struck up an inspiriting

march, the sound of which, however, was only audible to those immediately around. Edward's hands mechanically performed their accustomed duty upon his instrument, though he felt as if he could not have uttered a word had his life depended on it.

The quickness of the step, which had been at first moderate, increased every minute. Not one of the soldiers knew the object to which his efforts were directed; he only saw before him the dark masses of his comrades. Now and then a blank was visible in their ranks, but this was quickly filled up. All further view was prevented by the thick smoke with which every thing was enveloped.

Suddenly the word was given; "Charge with bayonet!"

The music ceased in a moment, but Edward's activity had to be redoubled. Following his company at a short quick trot, at each step he beat a sharp rat-tat-tat upon his drum.

A strange frightful sound suddenly thundered in his ear; something warm splashed into his face, and he stumbled over an object that lay in his path. Quickly regaining his feet, he looked round, the earth was thickly strewed with dead and dying; and the dense masses which but a moment before were standing there, were utterly dispersed.

"Form into column!" shouted the colonel. "Forwards my children!"

The thinned ranks hastily closed, and striding over the bodies of their fallen comrades, they rushed madly on.

A gust of wind, which for an instant dispersed the smoke, enabled Edward to perceive at some distance, a lofty entrenchment, on the summit of which the enemy were just then employed in charging their guns. Another moment, and innumerable fiery streams blazed forth.

Before Edward's ear had caught the accompanying roar,

he felt himself thrown down, and crushed with heavy bodies which not only shut out all further prospect, but seemed to deprive him of breath. For a time he lay senseless, but was aroused by successive explosions of artillery. His position, however, remained the same, and was excessively irksome. He found it quite impossible to move a limb. Whether he was wounded or not he had no means of ascertaining.

While endeavouring to relieve himself from some of the load above him, his ear caught a distant sound, which he could liken to nothing he had ever heard before, and which every moment became louder. The ground shook; an uninterrupted, hollow, rumbling thunder, ever louder, ever nearer, and totally unlike that of firing or of a natural tempest, fell with a sense of dread and alarm upon the listener. It was accompanied by a rushing noise, as of a waterfall, or a violent hail shower. As it approached nearer, this seemed to change into the clanking of many thousand chains. It burst over him. He felt himself crushed and suffocated by the bodies above him, which though lifeless, transmitted faithfully the impression they received.

It was a body of cavalry, composed of the Saxon regiment of cuirassiers and the imperial horse-guards, which at full speed were rushing across the battle field towards the enemy's encampment.

Once more its guns belched forth their murderous fire upon the storming party; then ceased entirely; the position was taken; the battle won.

But again Edward lay insensible. How long, he could never tell. A violent jerk at his arm brought him to himself. He felt freed from the super-incumbent weight, and once more saw day-light.

Upon opening his eyes, he perceived a Frenchman standing over him, endeavouring to strip him of his uniform. Edward, much astonished, asked the reason of this proceeding, and received the muttered reply from the soldier, that he had considered him dead, and had constituted himself therefore heir to any worldly property he might have died possessed of. He then turned away to another body which he forthwith proceeded to plunder.

Edward looked about him horrified. The dead lay around him in heaps. Many were already stripped of their clothing; and all so disfigured and mutilated that it was no longer possible to recognize them. He himself seemed to have escaped death by a miracle. As his slaughtered comrades fell upon him, their arms formed a kind of canopy over his body, so that neither the weight of the superincumbent dead, nor the heavy trampling of the cavalry had been able to crush him. Had it not been for this, he would most undoubtedly have been either pressed to death or suffocated.

Not far from him lay his colonel's horse, torn and bleeding, but the rider was no where to be seen. Neither could Edward discover one still surviving comrade to whom he might address his anxious inquiries.

Utterly unnerved and dispirited, he tottered to the spot where his regiment had stood at the outset of the engagement. The large drum belonging to the band, pierced by a cannon ball, showed the place where, in all probability, the musicians had last been. Gradually, as he went over the ground, Edward's recollection returned; and it was with a feeling of horror that he now remembered a little figure gliding by his side, when his regiment received the order to advance. In his stupor, Maria seemed to have vanished from his mind until this moment.

ria!" he exclaimed, bitterly, "even you too, poor
y did you not remain behind with the baggage?"
ough her features should be disfigured by the
hoofs, and her bright hair be dabbled in blood,
t sure he should be able to recognize her by her
figure and dress. Continually calling out her
wandered about over the bloody field. And lo!
iagic, the great drum began to heave before Ed-
onished eyes. It fell over, and Maria—unin-
; with eyes swollen with weeping, crept forth.
with joy, the two children fell sobbing into each
is. Now they felt no longer alone; the world
on them, even in the horrid aspect of a battle

had a very brief story to tell; she had run a
ance by Edward's side, but having fallen and
me separated from him, in her terror she had
protection into the great drum, in which a ball
dy made a convenient breach, and here, half
she had remained concealed up to this time.
hand, the two now walked on towards the for-
edoubt—which had cost so many thousand lives.
ild like to know," said Edward, "why they were
pon taking that place. Did it, I wonder, contain
nense treasure, or some object of very great im-
!"

y was so heaped up with the bodies of men and
at it was with difficulty they succeeded in gain-
ummit. The blood was flowing in streams down
and horribly mangled remains, heads and limbs
l been severed from the trunks, lay thickly strew-
!.

the redoubt nothing was to be seen but walls

earth, ditches filled with the slain, broken artillery waggons, and wounded and dying men. These latter presented indeed a moving spectacle. A Russian officer whose skull had been cloven nearly to the nose, with his dying breath still faltered a few trembling accents.

"What does the poor man say?" asked Edward, whose young heart was wrung with pity.

"He asks for a drink of water, for God's sake!" replied Maria sobbing.

Anxious to comply with this last wish, Edward looked eagerly around him. Ha! yonder, two Frenchmen are standing beside a wounded soldier—perhaps they will afford a draught from their canteens, to one whose extremity is indeed the last. He sprang hastily towards them.

At the new scene which here met his eyes, he forgot the one he had just quitted. A Russian with a shattered arm and wounded foot, sits upon the ground. Before him stand two Frenchmen, busily employed in tearing the uniform from his body. One sleeve is already free; the other, retained by the shattered bones of the elbow, resists their efforts. The poor wretch roars with anguish under the gripe of these worse than savages. Deaf to his shrieks they tear, along with the sleeve, flesh and bones asunder, to gain possession of a miserable garment. Edward fled from them as if they were spotted by the plague.

His steps were arrested by another Russsian, who had had both his legs shot off above the knee; and stood, or rather was placed, with the bleeding stumps buried in the sand. He had still strength enough to keep his body erect, though the finger of death had already marked his forehead with a broad white line. His hands were devoutly folded; his glazed eyes directed toward heaven, and slowly and distinctly his pale lips uttered their last prayer.

"Look, Maria!" said Edward much affected, "how piously this warrior dies. Doubtless he is commending his soul to God, and praying for a peaceful departure."

"Oh no, no!" returned Maria shuddering, "he is cursing the enemies of his country, and asking of God a bloody revenge."

"Oh how thankful I am," said Edward, "that these curses cannot fall upon me. If it were to depend upon me there would be no war at all. I should never I am sure know peace again, if I were the cause of only one man losing his life."

They were hurrying away to leave this scene of horrors, when a numerous and brilliant group of horsemen, the Emperor Napoleon in the midst, arrested their further progress. The emperor had come to take a survey of the battle-field. With a countenance cold and stern as marble, he rode unmoved over the dead, the dying, and the wounded. Not one muscle of that severe face relaxed at the groans, and the cries, and the shrieks of the miserable men who lay around in thousands. Raising his glass he coolly surveyed the entire country. "A brilliant victory!" began one of the generals who rode at his side. "The redoubt and the village below there were nobly defended, and both taken. Fifty thousand killed and wounded cover the field."

"Fifty thousand killed and wounded for the sake of a mound of earth and a burnt-down village!" said Edward to himself. "What a price!"

"Nothing now bars our entry to that ancient seat of the czars, Moscow!" continued the general—"Vive l' empereur!"

And "Vive l' empereur!" was shouted by the whole of the glittering circle.

But that old Russian, propped in the sand, with death upon his face, stretched out his hand to seize a musket lying near him, to point at the hated invader.

A Frenchman perceiving his intention, smote him a blow over the head, which at once killed him.

Napoleon galloped away. Edward and Maria followed at a distance to seek out the remnant of their regiment.

Night came, and the moon rose, but she hid her pure beams behind dark heavy clouds, as if unwilling to illumine the earth which had drunk so deeply of its children's blood. Many thousands of dying men groaned and shrieked forth their agony into the still midnight air, imploring a speedy death, a quick deliverance from their unspeakable torments. And the grim monarch, to whom kings in their pride must bow, came striding over the field, extinguishing one flickering life after another, as a sexton extinguishes the church lights after a festival.

The weary eyelids closed, the convulsed limbs lay stretched to rest, and the gaping wounds bled no longer. But there were many, and their lot was indeed bitter, who could not die, whose thread of life seemed tenacious as an iron cord. Deaf to their sufferings and to their despair, the spectre passed them by, and only returned to their relief after many days of protracted misery.

All along the lines of entrenchment friend and foe lay side by side like brethren. Many even sat propped back to back upon the lofty parapet, like living men gazing down upon the battle-field. Ere long, and their bones were bleached by the sun, after the beasts of prey and the quick progress of corruption had done their work. The winds of heaven as they passed over that wide and desolate plain, tossed the hair about the fleshless skulls, and the unnumbered skeletons lay testifying to the much vaunted greatness of the conqueror.

CHAPTER XIII.

Presumption.

Moscow, the reward of the victory, lay before the eyes of the conquerors, with its palaces and churches. The gilded domes and minarets of the Kremlin glittered in the sunbeams, and the eyes of the invaders flashed at the prospect of plunder; for what store of spoils might not be expected in that ancient and wealthy city! Without the discharge of a piece, or the stroke of a sabre, they at length passed within its gates.

But Napoleon's triumph was doomed to be quenched in disappointment. He had expected, as in every other conquered capital, that he would have been met by a deputation of the most distinguished inhabitants, imploring his clemency, and submitting to his power.

Far otherwise. The streets were as if dead: no gazing, hurrahing crowds received the French army.

Strange, that this same man who at times affected such utter contempt for his fellow men, should feel his pride so touched when they refrained their empty homage. Murmuring he passed through the deserted streets towards the magnificent Kremlin, which he had selected for his residence.

To his soldiers, on the other hand, the circumstance that the greater portion of the inhabitants had fled, and nearly all the houses stood empty, was anything but unwelcome. They proceeded at once to consider them as their *own property*, and to take for their own use whatever they *found in them* of value. They occupied suites of roo

which had been fitted up for princes. In wanton insolence they stretched their mud-covered boots upon costly sofas, silken couches, under golden canopies. They brushed their gaiters upon tables of rare and costly woods, and made the richest and most delicate porcelain their ordinary drinking vessels. The cellars and the store rooms were broken open, their contents rifled and shamefully squandered. They surfeited themselves with the rarest viands, and wines, fit for the tables of kings, flowed in profuse streams. They ransacked cupboards and wardrobes, and appropriated to their own use the linen shawls, embroidered kerchiefs, and whatever other articles for the toilet they might contain.

As darkness approached, they rushed with bundles of lighted tapers in their hands, or torches of pine wood, into the various magazines, totally unmindful whether or not they contained inflammable materials. Did fire ensue through their heedlessness, they proceeded recklessly on their way, never attempting to extinguish it—was it not the enemy's property that they were burning?—Rather did they behold with malignant pleasure, when the flames spread and seized on the neighbouring dwellings. As the general acted, so acted also the private. But the instrument of men's sins, becomes often that of their punishment.

Many of the houses of Moscow being built of wood, the fires spread with the greatest rapidity. They might still have been checked, if the soldiers, instead of plundering, had taken the necessary means of extinguishing them. But this was a course that occurred to none. In their presumptuous security they considered all such measures unnecessary, already anticipating new victories, and new conquests.

It was during one of these days of terror, that a carriage drawn by four horses, stopped in the vicinity of a burning house. A gentleman severely wounded was borne forth by several soldiers of the Rhenish Regiment, and with the aid of a surgeon in attendance, was placed as commodiously as possible within the carriage. A little girl took her place at his side, and in addition to the coachman, a soldier, whose head and arm were also bound up, mounted the box.

"But will the colonel be able to bear so long a journey?" was the anxious question, put to the surgeon by a little drummer, who was no other than our friend Edward.

"Make yourself easy, my lad!" returned the other. "The colonel is no longer good for anything here, and were he even quite recovered from his wounds, he would not be fit for service. Better that he should return home where he can have proper attention and nursing."

"Good bye, Maria!" said Edward, turning to the little girl. "Take good care of his honour, and do whatever you can to make him comfortable. I shall be sure to find you sometime or other with your parents, who will have gone back to their mill by this. So good bye till we meet again!"

He sobbed, so did Maria, as she reached out her hand to him.

"Oh Hoyer!" said Edward to the soldier upon the box, "I feel so sad! all, all that have been kind to me, and that I really care anything for, are leaving me—you, the colonel and Maria. How will it go with me now? Lieutenant ——— is no friend of mine; and besides him, that wicked Donnert, who murdered little Milly, is again with the company, and he looks as if he only repressed his bad feeling toward me from fear of you. What is now to becom

of me?" "Don't begin to vex yourself!" replied the wounded sergeant, from his lofty seat. "It would be a sin if you complained. Have'nt you come off the best of us all? Not even a scratch have you to show from head to foot. I wouldn't have minded for a broken head, but to have a finger shot away on my right hand, and be made a cripple of for life is too bad. Right willingly would I change places with you. Well, good bye, a merry meeting, and soon!"

The sergeant here reached out down to him his uninjured left hand, which Edward grasped and heartily shook. The carriage went rumbling on its way, the young drummer accompanying it for a short distance.

"And this is all the mark I get!" grumbled Hoyer to himself, gazing mournfully upon his mutilated arm. "Aye, aye, the horse that has earned his oats, just never gets them. I had reckoned upon the little cross of the legion of honour as sure as fate. Didn't I stand like a rock in front of the enemy? And what are they that have filched my well won honour away from me? Sneaking cowards, that took care to stoop low enough when they saw the shot coming; and as soon as warm work began, looked about them for a good deep ditch to shelter their precious selves in."

Edward on his part would gladly have given every order in the world, might he but have been permitted to return to his beloved home. With a bleeding heart he at length saw the carriage drive out of his sight.

Moscow during this time resembled a rag fair more than any thing else, the streets being heaped up with thousands of various articles, which had been dragged or thrown out of the burning houses. Splendid mirrors, tapery, furniture of every description, beds, various

articles of food, chests, cooking utensils, casks, bales of merchandise, linen, formed a varied and confused mass, exposed to imminent hazard by the ever increasing fury of the flames.

The French observed the progress of the conflagration with the most perfect indifference, either forgetful or regardless of all care for the future. At length, however, the fire had attained such violence that they were compelled to take measures for their own safety. They withdrew, therefore, into the buildings which were still untouched, where they were obliged to live, crowded together in inconvenient numbers. In the meantime they hoped with each day that passed, to hear that a peace was concluded. But four weeks stole away, and their expectations remained unfulfilled. In the midst of their plundered treasures, they began to fall short of those necessaries of life, which they had at first so sinfully wasted. In the whole of the surrounding districts, no further supplies could be found; the villages were all burnt down, and their inhabitants, who were wont to furnish the capital with produce, were nowhere to be seen.

Napoleon at length saw himself driven to the necessity of ordering a retreat. But to retreat was to aggravate their difficulties ; the only way which was open to the troops, being that which they had already once traversed. There all was waste and desolate ; no roof for shelter, no food for their support. And to all this, must be added, the ungenial autumnal weather, which this year had set in much earlier and with far greater severity than usual.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Retreat.

The cutting autumnal winds had stripped the trees of their foliage, and withered up the grass, and the excessive cold had rendered the earth as hard and firm as a thrashing floor. The face of the sky was darkened by heavy clouds, which ere long descended in a close sharp snow, painfully pricking the skin of man and beast exposed to it. In a very short time the earth was thickly covered.

The numerous swarms of the French army blocked up the roads. They had quitted Moscow laden with spoil, but the accustomed gaiety and light-heartedness were no longer visible among their ranks.

They marched along in silence; weariness and dissatisfaction upon their faces; the forced jest died upon their lips, and only now and then an impatient oath escaped them when some fresh obstacle came in their way. The dim eye was sunk deep in the socket, and a ghastly paleness was spread over the emaciated countenances.

They were the same troops, whose proud bearing and splendid equipments but a short three months before, had dazzled and delighted the eyes of the beholders; but their glory was departed, and had given place to an aspect of faded finery, of squalor and wretchedness. Instead of the the gilded helm and lofty schakko, many of them wore broad-brimmed, ungraceful fur caps. Others had head, *shoulders, and chest.* enveloped in costly shawls and tapes*try. Their faded* cloaks hung upon them in tatters, and *xposed the soiled* and tarnished uniforms beneath.

In the sides of the poor cavalry horses, it would have been easy to have counted every rib, and it was with difficulty they bore themselves and their riders along.

The penetrating moisture of the snow opened the seams of the soldiers' boots, so that very shortly the soles separated from the upper leather, and most of the men had to walk barefoot. No longer were heard the gay notes of military music; the trumpet's brazen voice was silent. A dozen feeble horses staggered in drawing one single cannon, and required the unintermitted use of the lash to keep them to their speed.

And when the hour arrived for the midday meal, no sheltering roof met the eye, no well-covered table, no place of rest. Even the black bread, which had formerly excited only complaint and disgust—that too failed. In gloom and silence, the soldier opened his knapsack, and searched its recesses for a morsel of food; greedily devouring a hard crust or a piece of horse flesh, if fortunate enough to obtain it. If a few ventured to leave the ranks to forage for provisions in the neighbourhood, they never returned, being invariably butchered by the exasperated Russian peasantry.

With sad and sinking hearts, the warriors gazed each day upon the sinking sun. Alas, the long, cold, fearful night, filled them with horror, for many of them survived it not. If a soldier stumbled in the early dusk, and, encumbered by his load, was not able immediately to regain his footing, no friendly comrade extended to him the helping hand. All passed him unheeding by; thick snow speedily enveloped him, his halting-place became his grave, and after a few short hours, his spirit passed to the other world.

The next comer stumbled over his corpse; with grea

hands he unstrapped the knapsack from the shoulders of the dead, and, if its weight augured that it contained any thing of value, transferred it to his own already overburdened back—the increased load serving only to ensure him, ere long, a like fate with its previous owner.

Ever more intense became the cold; ever more frightful the extremity. If after many long and wearisome marches the troops at length arrived at a town, they found only ruins. The houses had neither roofs, windows, doors, nor fireplaces. On their advance to the capital, they had laid waste and destroyed every thing—bitterly now had they to regret their own wantonness.

At night-fall when a halt was called, and the greater portion of the soldiers sank like feeble flies upon the snow-covered earth, the rest, somewhat less weakened, laboriously dragged from a considerable distance, stray pieces of wood, to make a blazing fire. The frozen men gathered towards it,—like flies round a candle,--eagerly stretching towards the flames, the coldest and most exposed parts of their bodies —their feet. Extended at full length upon the ground they gradually pushed themselves nearer and nearer to, the genial blaze. They marked not, even by the emitted odour, that their shoes, if they had them, were singed; they felt not that their feet were roasting.

A deep sleep spread its leaden wings over their pale, ghastly countenances; the snow fell hissing upon the flames, which gradually died out; and with them the vital spark of most of the sleepers.

In the early morning, when the drummer beat the summons to march, scarcely one living man rose up from the ghastly circle of frozen corpses; which were to lay there unburied until the awakening spring.

The horses which scarcely ever passed a night in a warm

stable, and had only a scanty supply of wretched hay, lost their strength, and fell dead upon the road. In one night alone, more than six thousand were frozen to death. Their riders were compelled to go on foot, all the surviving horses being required for the artillery and ammunition waggons.

How strikingly did all this evince God's might, and man's weakness. Before the breath of His mouth, those half million of warriors, with which Napoleon, in his vain presumption, had thought to conquer the world, fell scattered like the withered leaves of autumn.

Where was the emperor's boasted power, when he could not mitigate that killing cold by one degree, nor procure for his armies the necessary supplies for one single day?

The officers were no longer able to preserve order among their men. The common misery tore asunder all the ties of obedience, of fear, and of attachment. The men left their colours, rested or marched further, as they pleased. The army resembled an unravelled ball of parti-coloured thread, its course marked by dead bodies, abandoned waggons and pieces of artillery, scattered weapons, plundered treasures, and human corpses.

A hundred thousand had already fallen—and Edward still lived! He lived, was in health, and had scarcely yet suffered from hunger. Next to God he owed this to Maria, who had imparted to him many useful instructions for his march in such a climate as that of Russia. Following the advice she had given him, he had taken care before leaving Moscow to supply himself with strong, properly prepared boots, together with woollen stockings, waistcoats, and trowsers. Several pounds of chocolate, reserved for a time of need, were still untouched in his knapsack. His youth, his modesty, and his readiness to oblige, often procured him

victuals, when others had to go without; and still cheerful amid the wreck, he marched with the little troop to which his regiment was now diminished.

This state of comparative comfort amid general misery, excited the envy of his companions. The wicked drummer more particularly, who had caused Emily's death, eyed him with lowering and vindictive looks. The grudge he owed to Edward's father, on account of the wound he had received from him, was transferred to the innocent boy.

It was well that cold and want had reduced his strength, and crippled his power to do evil, else it had fared badly with Edward.

They had already left the demolished fortress of Smolensk, a long, long way behind them, when one evening the troops prepared as usual to bivouac in the open air.

Edward, as one of the least incapacitated, set out immediately to look for fuel; and soon lighted a blazing fire, at which the soldiers cooked their lean steaks of horse flesh. He had still the greater portion of his chocolate in store, and for some days past had been promising himself a warm and nourishing potion: though it was indispensible that he should prepare it in secret if he would not be robbed of his property by the others. Waiting, therefore, till he concluded all the rest were asleep, he set his little pot upon the fire, and mixed and brewed to his own complete satisfaction.

The mess was ready, and he was just on the point of raising it to his lips, when his evil genius, the drummer, slowly raised himself on his elbows.

"Ah!" he gasped forth, "what is it that smells so gloriously? What—chocolate! Let's see, my little man!" With these words he scrambled to his feet. Edward was terribly embarrassed. As he [illegible]

welcome disturber of his expected feast totter towards him, a violent struggle arose in his breast. The murderer of his darling Milly was the last person in the world with whom he felt disposed to share his treasured chocolate.

"Comrade," he said at length, "you shall share with me, though I have but little for myself."

"What's that! what's that!" said the other fiercely. "Share with you? I share with nobody! here with the mess!"

Greedily seizing the vessel with both hands, he swallowed at one draught the whole of the scalding liquid.

Edward looked on with suppressed rage; he felt that he was strong enough to hurl the emaciated drummer into the crackling flames. His arm was uplifted, his foot raised to execute the deed—when his glance turned upon the deep blue sky, and the bright and sparkling host of stars seemed each an eye of heaven to watch his conduct.

In purest radiance the moon herself, the queen of sweet and gentle influences, emerged that moment from behind the curtain of a dusky cloud—and as Edward beheld her, the thought of God returned to him and stilled the angry tempest within his breast.

"It is better to suffer than to commit violence;" he said to himself, and then stretched his weary limbs beside his slumbering comrades, his knapsack serving for a pillow. He could not restrain, however, a few tears from rolling down his cheeks at the thought of his untasted meal. Sleep at length closed his heavy and tearful eyes.

When he awoke next morning it was late: he found himself thickly covered with snow, and upon shaking it from him, and looking round, he saw that he was alone. His comrades were all vanished; vanished, also, was his knapsack.

By the manner in which the snow was so profusely heaped around him, he was induced to think that it must have been done by some one purposely, whose object doubtless, was to conceal him from the eyes of the others: and who was this so likely to be as the pilferer of the chocolate and the knapsack—the wicked drummer?

Edward looked round him, of corpses he saw enough, but not one living being. Mournfully he followed the track of the army.

After walking several hours, he came to a part of the country that appeared familiar to him. He was right; those blackened ruins before him were once the village where Maria's parents had lived. Yonder heap of rubbish denoted the spot where the mill formerly stood; nothing was left of it but stones and fragments of mortar; all the wood-work had been long consumed as fuel by the retreating army. The roofless walls of the village had probably served the troops for quarters during the preceeding night; at least this was indicated by the traces of recent watch-fires, and the appearance of several corpses, not yet wholly covered by the snow.

Poor Edward alas! found his expectations cruelly deceived. He had hoped to find the village, or at all events the mill, re-built, and Maria's parents returned, by whom he would be kindly and hospitably received. But not the slightest traces of them were visible. The pangs of hunger already gnawed him, and he had not about him a single morsel of bread.

He commenced a tedious and anxious search for provisions. A dead horse, hugely swollen and frozen quite stiff, lay upon the ground, from whose flanks large pieces of flesh had been already cut. But he could not think of this kind of food without loathing. Perhaps—he thought

to himself—something eatable might to be found in the knapsacks that were lying strewn about. Painfully his benumbed and swollen fingers undid the straps; eagerly he ransacked their contents. Gold he found in some—in still more, silver—in none, what he sought. How gladly would he have given fifty gold pieces for one sufficient meal!

A carriage with two broken wheels lay buried in the snow, in a little hollow on the river's bank. Several casks, their ends stove in, were lying near, and a few also uninjured, which Edward upon trying to move, found excessively heavy.

"Money, nothing but money!" he replied, and left the useless treasure lying. Oh, how earnestly did he wish that these chests, nay even but one of them, had contained meal or biscuit instead of untold gold!

He proceeded with his search. A small sledge, to which an emaciated horse had been harnessed, and which had sunk exhausted in the snow, next became the object of his anxious investigation. The snow had drifted considerably into it, and had covered whatever objects it contained with a hard coating of ice.

Edward exerted all his strength to remove some ragged coverings, but a large bundle, he could not tell of what, obstinately withstood his efforts, and he was obliged at length to take his sabre to assist him in discovering its contents.

But what a scene met his eye when at length he had succeeded in removing the wrappings! A young female worn to the bone, with haggard cheeks and hollow eyes, lay rolled up within the torn coverlet. On her bosom rested a young child, clothed in tatters, and closely—closely pressed in the mother's arms. Alas! sh

had vainly hoped to shelter her darling from the rude merciless blast, careless, though her own life became the forfeit! Calmly reposed that little head, sunk in eternal rest upon the bosom that throbbed no longer. Both had passed away to that place where there shall be no more crying, nor sorrow, nor complaint.

Edward had witnessed misery and death so often, that his eye had become accustomed to the sight; but what he now beheld was too affecting even for him. The tears burst in torrents from his eyes, and wringing his hands, he rushed from the spot.

But hunger growing every moment more intolerable, proved stronger than the sight of death itself, and after a while, drove him back to the place. With trembling hands he searched the sledge for some article of food. At length in the remotest corner he discovered a moderately sized bag of grey canvass, promising by its touch, to fulfil his hopes. Upon opening it, he found it to contain a mixture of barley and rye-meal.

What a treasure was this! On searching further he stumbled upon a small pan. With the aid of this he was able to prepare himself, from the groats and the meal, and some melted snow, a mess of porridge, which unsalted and unspiced, was to his taste excellent, for it was seasoned by hunger.

This clamorous guest being satisfied, Edward was able to direct his attention to other matters; and he proceeded to fill his pockets with as many of the gold pieces as he could carry without being encumbered by their weight.

While thus engaged, a bright idea struck him. He *recollected the small* arched cellar in which Maria and *himself had taken* refuge from the fire. Into this place *e now carried* or rolled all the money contained in the *iks and knapsacks.*

"There will be enough there to rebuild the mill, and something to spare besides," he said to himself, with great satisfaction. But his chief treasure—the meal bag—he crammed into an empty knapsack, and throwing it upon his shoulders, set forward on his journey.

On the evening of the same day he overtook the remainder of the troops, which had encamped in the neighbourhood of a dense forest. Hoping to find, if possible, some of his own country-people, he wandered for some time through the ranks.

An imploring voice arrested his steps. He looked, and saw a warrior, clad in singular costume, seated on the ground beside his horse. Judging from the dress, the person seemed to be half man, half woman, a wide petticoat covering his legs, while a richly embroidered, but soiled and tattered uniform, enveloped the upper part of his person. A course woollen horse-cloth served as a shawl, and a bandage wound several times round the head, answered the purpose of a turban. The remnants of what had been boots, were bound to his feet by bands of straw, his head and the upper part of his person reclined upon the belly of the horse, for the sake of procuring a little warmth.

"Comrade!" he said feebly, and in French, "have you anything to eat? I only ask you for a few mouthfuls."

Edward stood a moment in silence, and considered in his own mind whether or not he should comply with the request.

"Oh merciful God!" he said mentally. "Thou hast but just enabled me to find provision for a few days! But thou hast said, to do good and to distribute forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

He then replied aloud, "Have a little patience, while I *go and kindle* a fire."

He hastened away to cut down with his sword a bundle of pine branches, wherewith to make a fire. But this cost him a world of trouble. The branches were coated over with ice, and therefore wet when put upon the fire. At length after repeated failures he succeeded in making it burn. He then filled his little pan with snow and placed it on the fire to melt. But he had to fill it up many times before he had obtained a sufficient quantity of water. As soon as it had boiled, he stirred in a little barley and meal and let all boil together.

"But" said Edward to his companion, who gazed with unaverted eyes upon the smoking pan, "I have neither salt, nor anything to make it savoury!"

The other put his hand into the breast pocket of his uniform, and then reaching Edward a small substance wrapped in paper, said, "There, comrade, is something will do for you."

When Edward opened the paper what did he find? A bit of tallow candle. As he was stirring it in the porridge, the Frenchman handed him another paper, saying, "And there comrade is salt."

Edward would sooner have taken the little packet for a morsel of smoked sausage. It proved, however, to be nothing more nor less than a cartridge, containing gunpowder, which, nevertheless, he proceeded to scatter into their frugal meal.

Edward then offered to his guest the result of his cooking skill, and with it a leaden spoon. The Frenchman ate evidently with very great enjoyment, six spoonsful, he then obliged Edward to do the same. But the latter, while his companion was eating, had become aware of a circumstance, to him of no slight interest.

By the light of the now brightly blazing fire, and upon

closer inspection, he recognized, in spite of the change which want and misery had wrought in his features, the same French colonel, at whose instance he had been condemned to be shot.

During the period that had elapsed since that time, he had been advanced to the rank of general, and doubtless at that moment suspected nothing less, than that his present benefactor was the same despised little drummer, whom he had long since numbered with the dead.

But Edward felt a strange and peculiar satisfaction steal over him as he made this discovery. It was indescribably sweet to him, that he had it in his power to do good to his persecutor. Engrossed by this feeling he would altogether have forgotten his meal, if the general had not pressed him with the words:

"There, comrade, eat! It is very, very good!"

So Edward took as many spoonfuls as the Frenchman had taken, then it came to his turn—and so they went on until the pan was empty. He then obliged Edward to take his seat beside him, and advised him to follow his example and lean his head and back upon the horse. Edward obeyed, and was on the point of falling very comfortably asleep, when the fearful cry was raised: "The Cossacks! The Cossacks!"

Shots resounded, men shouted—all rushed about in wild confusion. The general flung himself upon his horse and disappeared, and Edward never saw him again. He, however, crept under the still warm embers of the pine-branches, and waited patiently until tranquillity was restored.

CHAPTER XV.

The Passage over the River.

The army had now arrived at the bank of the Berezina. During the interval occupied by throwing two frail and temporary bridges over the stream, the host of fugitives, with carriages and vehicles of every description became crowded up in a scene of the wildest disorder. Each one was anxious to be among the first to cross, and no one would yield precedence to another. In this struggle the way became blocked up with horses, cannon, ammunition waggons, carriages, and men.

Almost at the confines of this confused mass was a carriage, from which the French had unharnessed a pair of horses in pretty tolerable condition, which they were taking by force for the service of the artillery. Within the carriage lay a helpless invalid, Edward's colonel.

"Save yourselves!" he said mournfully to Maria at his side and to Hoyer upon the box. "Leave me to my fate. I have learned to look death in the face, and do not dread him, though he come with the knout in his hand, instead of the sword."

"God forbid, colonel!" replied Hoyer. "He would indeed be unworthy of the name of soldier, who would desert the head of his regiment in time of need. Besides, whether we will or not, here we must stop like a mouse caught in a trap. There is no going either backwards or forwards, if we were ever so wishful to do so. We must wait here till the enemy makes a little more room."

The colonel answered only by a sigh. Then turning to Maria he asked, "Are you hungry, my daughter?" She shook her head, though she had not tasted food that day.

The night came; the confusion continued to increase, and only arrived at its highest pitch next morning, as the Russians began to pour a shower of balls into the dense mass. Thousands were in consequence dashed in pieces, crushed, trampled upon, or run over by the carriages.

Then came the cry, "Sauve qui peut!" The wounded, the sick, the exhausted, and the wives and children of the soldiers, were mercilessly hurled out of the carriages and waggons, which were then rolled upon a heap and set on fire.

As a party of soldiers, with this intention, approached the colonel's carriage, Hoyer started up from his seat upon the box in great indignation.

"Comrades!" he exclaimed, "are you going to roast us alive, like so many sheep? Have we deserved this at your hands? There lies his honour, the colonel, who has been present at seventeen battles, and received thirteen wounds in your emperor's service! Have you no respect for a knight of the legion of honour? At least let him die quietly in his carriage. Respect the coffin of a brave warrior!"

The soldiers, some of whom understood German, looked at each other, and after exchanging a few words among themselves, directed their steps further, Hoyer's eyes following them with anxious attention.

"Maria!" he began quickly, "did you see what yon Frenchman was doing at that waggon?"

"No!" answered Maria.

"Do you see nothing? my eyes have become weak."

"I see" replied Maria, "a very faint smoke, as if from a lighted tobacco pipe."

"*If I didn't* think as much!" exclaimed Hoyer. "Now *God help us!*"

"The bridges are burning!" exclaimed several voices. general cry of horror arose. "We are lost!" resounded ı all sides. "Yes, indeed!" growled Hoyer, "and very peedily too. In a very short time we shall be either ɔurnt to death or blown up into the air. At all events we shan't die this time of cold. I really think it is after all the best way, for we shall be soonest out of our misery. To be sure we ought to do all we can to keep death at arm's length; and my heart bleeds for that poor innocent child. But what can I do? I, with my wounded arm can't even get down from the carriage to force my way to the powder waggon, still less is the little girl able to do so. It is worth trying, however, if I can make anybody understand me. Ho!" he shouted aloud, "the powder waggon there will explode directly! who will save all our lives by taking away the match which those rascally Frenchmen have just lighted?"

These words produced an effect the very opposite to what Hoyer had intended. They spread an instant panic among the crowd. Every one sought by a speedy flight to escape from the hazardous neighbourhood of the ammunition waggon. None but those who were already half dead remained. The movement of the crowd had, it is true, left the space more open, but so much time was already lost that Hoyer despaired of rescue, and every moment expected their destruction. "Are you afraid to die, little one?" he said to Maria.

"Not at all!" she replied, "for I shall then be quiet at last, and I shall go to heaven, and shall never be hungry and cold any more."

"*You are right,* child!" said Hoyer, moved. "N *pray to God to have* mercy upon our souls. It will *oon over with us.* Loud! Loud!" he repeated earn

as Maria with folded hands had begun to pray in silence. "I too want to take my part!"

And this time poor Hoyer testified no surprise when Maria began, "Our Father which art—Edward! there comes Edward!" she exclaimed joyfully, stretching out her arms towards him. "Ho! my brave lad!" shouted Hoyer, laughing and crying at the same moment, "art still alive? fling yourself on the ground, perhaps you may escape. Do as I bid you, and don't look so outrageously astonished. The match yonder on that powder waggon must be just burnt out—and then! And yet I could like now to live a bit longer. You too, Maria, eh! And most of all the lad himself, I don't doubt. Even the colonel would come round a bit, I verily believe, if he saw the youngster!"

In the meantime, Edward had darted off and seized the match which was just on the point of setting fire to an open powder-cask; and then carefully fastening the lid, returned to his newly-found friends.

In the midst of death and horror, there were now three happy ones, who in the joy of their re-union, forgot the perils that surrounded them. The colonel alone was unconscious of everything; he lay stretched out in the carriage almost wholly senseless. But the joy was of short duration. Cannon-balls began to fall thicker and thicker around them, and their situation became every moment more critical. Ere long a ball struck the colonel's carriage; the scattered splinters of one of the hind wheels, which was completely shattered, struck Edward upon the head; and the carriage itself with its heavy burden fell upon his right leg and broke it. His senses forsook him, and he sank bleeding to the earth.

When his recollection returned to him it was night

the moon, however, was at the full. In the carriage which still lay upon his leg, every thing was perfectly still; and an equal stillness reigned around him. But at some distance a dull indistinct sound might be heard. It proceeded from the Russians, who were plundering the pile of waggons, and making prisoners of all they found there.

Edward felt that he must have help, and that soon, whether from friend or foe. After trying in vain to extricate his broken leg, he proceeded to call out. No one heard him. Looking around, he saw lying close by him his drum, his faithful companion, which he had never yet deserted. Glad at having found the means of making himself heard, he drew forth the sticks, and commenced beating a thundering roll. The sound was borne sharp and distinct through the still midnight air. Its effect was soon visible in the carriage.

Something inside moved, and Hoyer's deep voice grumbled half angrily: "Directly, Captain! only let me hang on my cartridge box."

Maria wept, and exclaimed, "Stoop down, Edward, do, that the balls mayn't hit you!"

Even the colonel muttered in his fevered dream, "Forwards, my children! drive at them! down, down with everything!"

Those sudden sounds had the power even of recalling the dead to life, or at least of arresting the fleeting soul at the moment of departure. Near to Edward, a figure slowly raised itself: a ball had gone through the body. The emaciated countenance was covered with the hue of death, and in the pale moonlight the sunk and hollow eyes gleamed with a supernatural lustre. The man's whole frame from head to foot shook with cold, his teeth chattered in his head, while his dying lips shrieked out: "Not me!

not me! It was the devil that drummed this time, not I. I only did it once. It wasn't my fault that the little wretch couldn't bear it! Woman, let me go! why do you gripe me so horribly?"—

With a wild gesture, he clutched at his gaping wound, —then sank down, and died.

The drumsticks fell from Edward's hands. The murderer of his little sister, the despoiler of his knapsack, his bitterest enemy had met his doom. With awe and terror he gazed for a time upon the stiff and rigid corpse.

In the meantime, a company of Russian soldiers advanced towards him. Maria had recovered from her alarm, and recognizing in the Russian drummer a former pupil of Edward's, she cried out to him: "Bibikoff, assist your master! Don't you know us?"

Her Russian greeting procured the prisoners a more tolerable fate than had befallen the rest. They were, it is true, plundered of all the money they possessed, but their miserable condition was attended to. Slowly, but thoroughly in the end, the three invalids recovered from their wounds in a Russian lazaretto.

with as many of the gold pieces as they could contain, he ascended with a light heart. Young as he was, Edward had still gathered a pretty fair stock of experience. Knowing,—and his knowledge had been gained from what his own eyes had witnessed,—that money frequently separates chief friends, he thought it prudent in any case, to secure to himself some portion of the treasure, before he revealed its existence to the rest. With the joyful alacrity which generally animates the bringer of good tidings, he turned to the company and began: "During our retreat, I buried in this place a considerable treasure, which came into my possession, and which I now propose that we share amongst us in the following manner. Maria's father, as the owner of the ground where the treasure is concealed, to receive one-third. The other two-thirds to be divided among us poor prisoners. Are you satisfied?"

"As far as I am concerned," said the colonel, "I shall be quite content if I receive as much as will take me back to my own country. I have property enough at home, and willingly renounce any further claims."

Hoyer looked at his hands, on which he could count but two whole fingers, and the remains of three more, and said with a short embarrassed laugh: "I can't work—I am ashamed to beg; and so, my king of trumps, *I'll* oblige you by taking my share. Done!"

The miller and his wife seemed beside themselves with joy. They laughed, they cried, and nearly suffocated the gold-dispensing drummer with their caresses.

With the greatest caution, that their proceedings might not attract the notice of the villagers, the money was placed in the cart, into which all the party now scrambled, and then bid an eternal farewell to the village; for the

happy miller was now quite resolved to return to Germany. His portion of the treasure proved to be quite sufficient to purchase another mill, and all the requisite machinery. In the first town the travellers came to, the division was made and another vehicle purchased, for the use of our three ransomed prisoners. As they took their seats in it, many of their companions looked at them with envy, and one, turning imploringly to the colonel, begged to be allowed to accompany them.

The speaker was the once haughty and over-bearing lieutenant,—now, however, he was subdued and humble enough.

"Mr. Seestern," replied the colonel, "the carriage is not mine exclusively, but belongs to my two companions as well. If they are agreeable, I have no objections to comply with your wish."

How courteously could the lieutenant now entreat a favour of those whom he had once treated as so immeasurably his inferiors, and they, to their credit be it related, cheerfully complied with his request, and throughout the journey behaved to him with kindness and consideration.

Mr. Winch was standing in his workshop, which, as has already been mentioned, was situated in the yard behind the house, and was busily employed in cutting leather which lay before him on the table. He was working alone; and indeed there was no rooom for assistants, for the place was full of household furniture, beds and such like. However, the more valuable articles were wanting, and what remained showed the marks of poverty.

It was at the commencement of the month of May, 1814, and near the hour of noon. The door opened and a man in travelling costume entered.

"God save you and yours! friend Winch!" he said in a cheerful voice.

The sadler looked up. His dejected countenance brightened, and heartily shaking the new-comer by the hand, he said in much suprise: "Eh! my old schoolfellow, George Nauman, let me make sure that my eyes don't deceive me. You have made yourself very scarce of late. Where have you hid yourself all these many years?"

"In Russia!" answered Nauman. "Where I had rented a mill and married a good wife. But the French have burnt down my premises, and so I have come back again here with my family."

"And what do you think of doing now?" said Winch, his mind however evidently occupied with something else.

"Buy or rent a mill."

"Have you money?"

"No, but good friends who I have no doubt will assist me. You for one; you are well to do in the world, have a capital house, a good business, and plenty of credit. You can be of great use to me."

Winch smiled bitterly as he replied: "My poor fellov sufferer. You are greviously mistaken. Once I *had* a you speak of, now nothing. See here the miserable rem nant of my former wealth and comfort. My worksh serves for my dwelling as well, and that only till the d after to-morrow. The house and premises will then be s for what they will fetch to pay my debts, and I m quit then for ever. Yes, Nauman, the war has robbed of all my worldly wealth, and of more than that."

"How can that be?" asked Nauman incredulously

"It has robbed me of two children," replied W gloomily.

He went to a door which opened into a little dark

that served as a kitchen, and called out: "Come here wife, we have got a welcome guest to see us. Emily seems to be lying pretty quiet there, but feed her that she may not disturb us with her crying."

Mrs. Winch entered, and cordially welcomed the stranger, then stooped down to take the child out of the cradle.

"A lovely child!" said Nauman admiringly.

"So it is!" returned Winch, "but I had rather it had been a boy. And then it should have been called Edward."

"Why? don't you like girls?"

"Oh, it's not on that account!" replied Winch. "And indeed God in this little one has graciously made up for the loss of our murdered Milly. But my Edward—" He walked to the window to conceal the starting tears.

"Well, what is the matter with Edward then?" said Nauman in a sympathising voice.

"He gave himself up to death for my sake—and a bitter death it was"—sobbed Winch. "Yes"—he continued solemnly, laying aside his cap and folding his hands, "And my heart shall bless thee for it, my child, to all eternity!"

Mrs. Winch wept bitterly.

"How and where did he die then?" began Nauman after a pause.

"Leave that!" said Winch entreatingly. "You must have heard or seen how dreadfully our soldiers perished in Russia by the sword, by hunger, by cold and nakedness. So too died my son!"

"But are you quite sure that such was the case?" said Nauman. "Many German prisoners of war are now coming back from Russia, and I have myself been commis-

sioned to deliver a letter from a young drummer to his parents in this town."

"From a young drummer? this town?" said Winch and his wife in one breath, turning red and pale by turns. Both trembled with expectation.

"Yes!" replied Nauman, very quietly putting his hand into his pocket, "the address is not very distinctly written, or it may have got rubbed off during its long journey."

Quick as lightning Winch snatched the letter from his hand.

"That is my son's writing," he shouted, quite besides himself with joy, and began tearing the letter instead of opening it.

Mrs. Winch started from her seat, and pressing her screaming child to her bosom with one hand, hurried to her husband's side to catch a sight of the dear and well-known characters.

The letter ran thus:

My Dear Parents,

I am alive and well, in the next minute I shall be with you.

Your

Edward.

The door was flung open, "Edward is come! Edward is come!" shouted Robert and Bertha, one arm holding their school-books, with the other clinging to and pulling Edward along with them. His parents overcome with joy and surprise fell upon his neck, and covered him with kisses.

In the meantime the little room became quite filled with people. The colonel, his lieutenant, Hoyer, Nauman's wife and children, among whom Maria was not the last, took their share in the general joy.

When the tumult had in some measure subsided, Edward spoke as follows:

"I have brought back with me, for you and for me too, a memorial of the past which I have sacredly preserved" —he produced the two drumsticks. "These I was able to save: the drum I was obliged to leave behind in Russia."

"And here is another token of remembrance," chuckled Hoyer, pointing to the table upon which he and his companions had quietly been placing several money-bags.

"Those are not all mine!" cried Edward eagerly, as his eyes hastily ran over their number.

"With your leave," Hoyer resumed, "I have added my share to them. If you can find anywhere here in your house a little coner that will do for an old soldier, who does not want much, and in spite of his lame hand, can still manage to rock the cradle, and do an odd turn now and then,—why in that case the matter's soon settled. His honour, the colonel, gives me leave to stop with my adopted son, and has promised to see about my getting my discharge."

"We too" said Nauman, "remain here also, if as I hope, a mill is to be had in the neighbourhood. We will then be all one family, and do our best to forget past sorrows. This house is again your own, friend Winch, and something more besides that."

"A very pleasant sort of billetting!" exclained Winch. 'Welcome, welcome, all of you! Run wife, and you children bestir yourselves. Bring out the best we have in the house, and don't spare wine. But first let us thank our merciful God that He has not tempted us beyond our strength; but with the temptation has made a way to escape that we may be able to bear it."

T. HARRISON, PRINTER, BRIGGATE, LEEDS.